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THE OTHER SIDE  
OF THE  
OPIUM QUESTION

BY

W. J. MOORE

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DRUGS SURGEON-GENERAL H.M. FORCES, EASTERN DIVISION, BOMBAY,  
HONORARY SURGEON TO THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.



LONDON  
J. & A. CHURCHILL  
NEW BURLINGTON STREET  
1882

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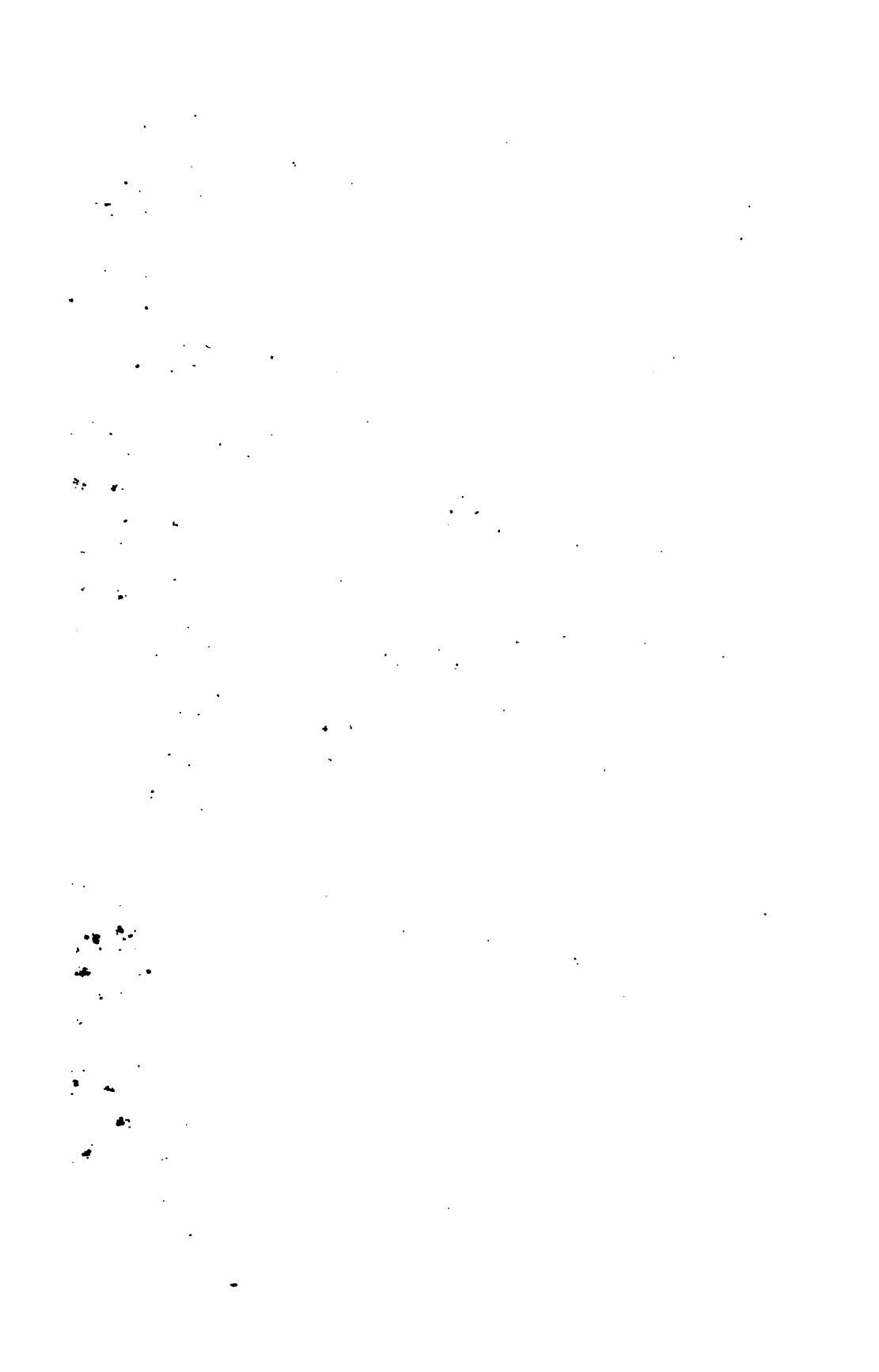




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**ON THE**

**OPIUM QUESTION**

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## OPIUM QUESTION

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W. J. MOORE

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DEPUTY SURGEON-GENERAL H.M. FORCES, PRESIDENCY DIVISION, BOMBAY,  
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## P R E F A C E

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THE following articles excepting the first were recently published in the ' Indian Medical Gazette.' But the scope of a purely professional journal must necessarily be limited. I have therefore determined to reprint the papers in a separate form in order that they may reach a wider circle of readers. In this procedure I am actuated by the firm impression that the British public are being misled by probably well meaning but certainly mistaken persons, who erroneously regard the use of opium as the crying evil of the times. Should such persons succeed in their endeavours the result could only be increased taxation on the people of India, which neither they, nor, in these days of a depreciated rupee, the Europeans employed in the country could endure. For I regard as chimerical, and without the limits of possibility, that, as proposed by some enthusiasts, the British tax payers would ever consent to bear the loss of the six millions annually, which the abolition of the opium trade would entail on the revenue of India. Especially when they would be doing so

for the purpose of preventing a comparatively few Chinamen, suffering from the abuse of an agent, which many more Chinamen find to be a source of enjoyment, of comfort, a necessity, and even a blessing. If the opium trade were really productive of all the evils attributed to it by anti-opiumists and missionaries, it would still be questionable if its abolition would not be productive of far greater evils, both to India and to China. To India by the sequence of increased taxes; by throwing large numbers of people out of employ, depriving them of an hereditary occupation and rendering them destitute; and by materially reducing the revenue of some of the most important Native Chiefs, as Scindiah and Holkar. To China (as the Chinese will have opium) by obliging the people to use the native-grown drug, which is more deleterious than Indian opium; by extending the growth of opium in China; and especially by the opening up of the country to Europeans, which is the price or *quid pro quo* the anti-opiumists demand from China, in exchange for the abolition of the Indian opium trade. When Asiatics and Europeans thus come into contact, history shows that situations must arise which do not always result favorably to the former.

I do not advocate the use of opium. Were it possible I should rejoice to see a law against the immoderate use of opium in force throughout the world. But of the two I would prefer to see the immoderate use of spirits abolished, as the greatest of two evils.

The moderate use of opium, and the moderate use of spirits (as sanctioned by all law—human and divine—except Mahomedan law) I hold to be legitimate—also under innumerable circumstances beneficial to mankind, both in health and in sickness.



# THE OTHER SIDE OF THE OPIUM QUESTION

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## ARTICLE I

As showing that my attention has long been directed towards the extent and results of the use of opium, I quote from my Annual Report for 1874, as Superintendent-General of Dispensaries and Vaccination in Rajpootana, published as a "Selection from the records of the Government of India, Foreign Department No. 108, of 1875."

In the report for 1871 details were given of an inquiry as to the number of persons using opium to the general population. During 1870, for six months, a record was kept at twenty dispensaries of the number of persons attending who used opium, the return showing a percentage of 6·73 on a total of 38,644 persons, while the percentage from different institutions only varied between six and eight. I then remarked that the results of the inquiry are so extraordinary as showing so low a proportion of opium-eaters, that if they were not so uniform I should conclude many, from some reason or other, have not confessed to the practice. And yet, so far as I am aware, there is no shame or odium felt on, or attaching to, the use of opium. People take their opium, or rather

their "umal-pawnee,"\* very much as we might drink a glass of wine. And they often take it when meeting together in addition to the customary daily draught, just as Europeans might celebrate with wine the assemblage of friends. Being thus disappointed in the results of my inquiry, as hitherto made, I now contemplate, instead of returns from so many institutions, limiting a new inquiry to a few selected dispensaries. This measure has been carried into effect, and I am assured that great care has been taken in inquiring, from each person attending the dispensaries, as to opium eating or opium smoking, and in recording the same. The result is shown in the following table :

No. of institutions supplying returns . . . . .	13
No. of patients questioned . . . . .	36,636
No. of persons using opium . . . . .	4,139

Percentage to total using opium—

Males . . . . .	63·32
Females . . . . .	10·74
Children . . . . .	25·94

Total percentage of persons using opium 11·29

From the above, and from the inquiries instituted during the previous year, it would appear that the percentage of people to population using opium in Rajpootana is not so great as I, in common with most Europeans, had imagined. From personal questioning of those attending some of the dispensaries, my impression now is that the percentage of opium-eaters is not in reality much greater than as shown in the return, at least among the classes of people most frequenting the dispensaries. From observation and inquiry I am, however, of opinion that in the upper ranks of society the habit would be found comparatively more prevalent. It will be observed that while

\* Solution of opium in water.

the ratio of women indulging in opium sinks to the figure of 10·74 per cent. on total consumers, and to 1·22 on total number of patients, the ratio of children attains the higher figure of 25·94 on total consumers, and 2·94 on total number of patients.

The proportion of children attending the dispensaries under twelve years of age is about 20 per cent. on total of patients, giving to this class 7327 of the total patients, which again gives the high ratio of upwards of 15 per cent. of all children dosed with opium ; and if the inquiry were made with reference to younger children, to say two years of age, I believe the proportion would be at least doubled. Native women in this country have not the opportunity as mothers in Europe enjoy of giving their children opium under the guise of "soothing syrup" or "elixirs." They, therefore, quiet the fractious or sick child with a little watery solution of the drug, being usually the "umal-pawnee" prepared for the father. And, doubtless, if the truth were known, not a few children die under such treatment.

The almost total absence of the practice of smoking opium is also shown by the statistics, the percentage of those smoking the drug to those using it in other ways being the low figure of '31. When narcotics are added to the inevitable "hubble-bubble," bhang, a preparation from the Indian hemp, is the material nearly always employed.

My inquiries into the prevalence of opium eating have not enabled me to arrrive at any very satisfactory conclusions : *first*, as to its use by the people in any particular disease ; and, *secondly*, as to any resulting disease from its use. For instance, I have only one case of paralysis, and one case of peritonitis, among the ailments, while one opium-eater is returned under each head. This would, of course, tend to show, if accepted literally, that the use of opium was most prevalent in such diseases, a conclusion which would be, although in strict consonance with the figures, manifestly absurd, as a generalisation from so small a number.

The following table shows the proportion of opium-eaters to the total attending for some of the principal diseases where the figures are large enough for the purpose of drawing a conclusion :

Malarious fevers . . . .	10·22
Rheumatism . . . .	15·59
Syphilis . . . .	6·50
Leprosy . . . .	7·1
Ophthalmia . . . .	2·7
Diarrhoea . . . .	2·2
Hooping-cough . . . .	3·9
Skin diseases . . . .	2·6

This would certainly tend to evidence that opium is more used in such painful affections as rheumatism and leprosy, and also in fever, than for most other diseases, and such, probably, is a fact, which would be confirmed by further inquiry.

With regard to the point held in view of ascertaining if any diseases were caused by opium, the investigation is even less satisfactory. As before mentioned, the greatest percentage to total occurs for those diseases of which the smallest number present. One of the results of opium is said to be a peculiar diarrhoea, which sooner or later is stated to attack the person indulging. But, neither for the last nor for the former years do my figures show any preponderance of such malady. But as during the first period there were more opium-eaters returned as applying to the dispensaries for constipation than for any other affliction, so for the second year my figures give a ratio of upwards of 20 per cent. of opium-eaters among those applying for relief for this particular condition. The number returned as treated under the heading constipation is 65·7, sufficiently large to justify a deduction. I am indeed of opinion that the only malady opium eating in Rajpootana tends to foster is the minor ailment of constipation : a conclusion doubtless somewhat startling to those worthy people who

esteem opium eating worse than spirit drinking, and who would at any cost stop, not only its sale, but also its production by the bountiful bosom of the earth. I do not of course defend the practice of immoderate opium eating, neither do I advocate the drug being given indiscriminately to children. But daily evidence sufficiently proves that it is often or continuously administered to children without the latter being very much the worse for it, and that grown up people may take it without injury for years—may even, under certain circumstances and at certain times, consume it with advantage. The physiological fact appears to be, that opium, when taken into the system, acts in some respects very much as alcohol, and the use of stimulants in some shape or other always has been (from the days of Noah, and probably before his period), and always will be a desideratum, it may even be said a necessity, to the human race. Those using opium in this part of the country do not, as a very general rule, indulge in alcohol. Of course there are many who take opium, as there are those taking alcohol, immoderately, and simply as the means of intoxication. But he must be a bold man who dare fling the stone at the majority of persons using opium, at least in this part of the country. When taken by the camel-feeders in the sandy deserts of Western Rajpootana, it is used to enable the men, far away from towns, or even from desert villages, to subsist on scanty food, and to bear without injury the excessive cold of the desert winter night and the scorching rays of the desert sun. When used by the impoverished ryot it occupies the void resulting from insufficient food, or from food deficient in the necessary elementary substances ; and it affords the ill-nourished cultivator, unable to procure or store liquor, not only a taste of that exhilaration of spirits which arises from good wine, but also enables him to undergo his daily fatigue with far less waste of time than would otherwise occur. To the “kossid” \* again, obliged to travel

\* Kossid means a runner or messenger. Such men are maintained at the native courts and travel long distances very quickly.

a long distance, it is invaluable. In short, it is the *abuse* and not the use of opium which must be credited with the undoubted deleterious results of immoderate indulgence of the practice of either eating or smoking the drug. If the production of every article susceptible of abuse in its employment were considered wrong, there would, indeed, be very few persons rightly employed.

## ARTICLE II

THE consideration of the question of the opium trade with the Chinese, and the effects of opium on the human constitution, may with propriety be preceded by some remarks on the characteristics of the Chinese people, as both the questions of morality and of effects hinge, to a considerable degree, on the peculiar habits, temperament, characteristics, constitution, and idiosyncracy of the natives of the Celestial Empire. A recent author\* thus describes the Chinese :

"There is not a nation yet known to exist on the earth whose inhabitants are so habitually and systematically profligate as the Chinese; vice of the most revolting kind being openly practised and indulged in without shame or punishment. Chastity is unknown among the lower orders of women, and is only preserved among the higher by rigorous seclusion and want of opportunity. The degradation of women in China is absolute and complete. Gain is the limit of a Chinaman's ambition, and he regards not the means by which wealth is obtained, being deficient of probity in thought, word, and deed. Cunning and jealous beyond measure, servilely abject to their superiors, they exhibit tyranny and injustice to all below them; in fact, there are no judges who administer laws impartially and justly. All classes, from the highest to the lowest, are addicted to gambling, cheating, and fraud, and the dexterity of Chinese thieves is proverbial."

Monsieur Huc, who lived long among the Chinese, states : "At Manilla the law forbids a Chinaman to marry a native woman until he has become a Christian.

\* Eden, 'China and the Corea,' 1877.

When the Chinese wish to marry, therefore, they receive baptism just as they would go through any other ceremony that was required. But if, even after the lapse of many years, the fancy takes them to return to their own country, they leave the wife and religion behind and go back as they came. . . . The Chinese is so completely absorbed in temporal interests, that his whole life is only materialism put in action. Lucre is the sole object on which his eyes are constantly fixed; a burning thirst to realise some profit, great or small, absorbs all his faculties—the whole energy of his being. He never pursues anything with ardour but riches and material enjoyment."

Captain Sherard Osborn\* states: "I believe the picture drawn by Huc to be a perfect photograph of the race."

Surgeon-General Gordon† writes: "Personal cruelty is distilled into their nature from their infancy;" and this author details how by-standers joked at the sufferings of those submitted to operation at the hospital established for the Chinese. He also tells us, that the men objected to women occupying space in the hospital, saying "any place good enough for women!"

Fortune‡ also tells us: "When mothers are poor, or have large families, or observe any indication of an illness likely to be troublesome or expensive, they cast the little creatures away without regret."

Surgeon-General Gordon also states: "Children when seized with illness are cruelly treated, and their sufferings are sometimes made the subject of jest even by their mothers."

Sirr§ states: "There is not a disease to which human nature is subject that may not be found prevalent in China, and frequently in its worst and most terrific form;" and this he attributes in a great degree to the

\* Osborn, 'British Relations in China.'

† Gordon, 'China from a Medical Point of View.'

‡ Fortune, 'China and the Chinese.'

§ Sirr, 'China and the Chinese.'

tter absence of any form of sanitation, and even of cleanliness.

Sirr also informs us that when the Emperor could not obtain metal to make coin, Buddhist temples were despoiled of their images.

Notwithstanding the boasted civilisation of past ages, the intelligence of the bulk of the Chinese people is not even now of a very high order, and their ignorance of many matters is amazing. For instance, when as recently as 1875 it was proposed to introduce railways into the Celestial Empire, a vigorous native protest was fulminated against them, in which, among other things scarcely less astounding, it was alleged that in all countries where railways exist they are considered a very dangerous mode of locomotion, and beyond those who have very urgent business to transact no one thinks of using them.

Legal tortures and punishments are divided into inferior and superior. Among the former are the *wooden collar*, which prevents the wearer reaching his mouth with his fingers; *squeezing the fingers and ankles*; and *imprisonment* in most filthy gaols. Among the latter are *cutting into small pieces* and *strangulation*. But gaolers and magistrates frequently resort to other modes of punishment, such as *hanging by one leg and arm*; *hanging by the armpit*; *standing on tiptoe*, with the head through the top of a cage, whereby the greater part of the weight of the body is supported by the bulk of the head and chin; *the iron shirt*, an apparatus so made that pieces of skin or flesh protrude through apertures, which pieces are then cut or rasped off; *the hot-water snake*, a hollow snake of porcelain placed round the body, or the arm, and then filled with scalding water; *whip of hooks*, and *kneeling on sharp bits of crockery*.

The history of the trading intercourse between European nations and the Chinese, while not free from grave faults on the part of the former, abounds in instances of the most barbarous cruelty and breach of faith on the part of the latter. The ill treatment of Sir Henry Parkes and

the murder of his attendants under a flag of truce, was an episode not to be surpassed in deceit and cruelty in the annals of any other nation, ancient or modern. In 1839 a native opium dealer was publicly strangled at Canton before the foreign factories, whereupon all the European flags were hauled down. At 1870, at Tien-tsin, the populace rose against foreigners, and barbarously murdered the French Consul, the interpreter and his wife, a Catholic priest, nine Sisters of Mercy, a French merchant and his wife, three Russians, and some others. The whole of these victims were put to death in the most barbarous manner; nor was death allowed to stay the indignities to which the mutilated bodies were subjected. And so on might be noted numbers of similar instances of cruelty and breach of faith culminating in the treacherous murder of Mr Margary at a comparatively recent date.

There is reason to believe that in ancient times the Chinese were a very drunken people. Samuelson\* quotes the 'Announcement about Drunkenness,' an imperial edict believed to have been promulgated about 1116 b.c., in which it is stated, "our people have been greatly disorganised and lost their virtue, which can be traced to their indulgence in spirits." The 'Announcement' further prophesies the downfall of the empire from the general custom of drinking, and dire pains and penalties are declared against the vice. "If," says the 'Announcement' to the officers of State, "you are told that there are companies who drink together, do not fail to apprehend them all, and send them to Chow, *where I will put them to death.*" The whole denunciation being almost a fac-simile of the petitions of more recent periods against the use of opium; and as with the use of opium, so with the use of spirits in ancient times, it would appear that the vice was not limited to the lower orders, but even that some of the emperors, and many of the officers of State, indulged in a custom which they declaimed against

\* Samuelson, 'The History of Drink,' 1878.

with horrid threats. But the 'Announcement' is not the only evidence of the habit of drinking amongst the Chinese in ancient time; for the 'Shoo-king,' or ancient history, and the 'Shee-king,' or book of ancient poetry, teem with evidences of the over-indulgence in wine and spirits. In one of the poems an archery match is described, followed by a festival, in which the company began by drinking the health of the ruling sovereign, with a chairman at the head, and a vice at the bottom of the table—as if they were civilised Britons of the present century! When the guests became intoxicated their behaviour is narrated as follows:

"They dance about, now fast now slow,  
Can hardly keep their feet;  
What fools they are, they do not know,  
No one resumes his seat."

If further evidence were required to prove the excessive drinking habits of the ancient Chinese, it is to be found in the writings of Confucius and Mencius, who flourished in China about 478 B.C. and 288 B.C. "Loving to play and to drink, instead of fulfilling duties to father and mother," were flagrant vices of their days.

It would, however, appear that drinking in after years became much less prevalent than in the ancient times mentioned above; and this is referred to the influence of the Buddhist religion, in the commandments of which intoxication is especially interdicted. Still, some amount of excess continued even to the present day, and from the known craving, as of a necessity, of some stimulant by all races, it is more than probable that, had not opium been introduced into China, the consumption of liquor by the Chinese people would have been very much greater than it is now; probably, comparatively speaking, the evil would have rivalled intemperance in Great Britain. Even now, however, it is very considerable. Arrack is distilled from rice and millet, as it was a 1000 years before the Christian era; beer, wines and spirits from other coun-

tries are imported in large masses to China ; and the importation is constantly increasing. Taverns for the sale of intoxicating liquors abound in every Chinese town ; there is no restriction whatever in the sale of intoxicating drink ; and private wine parties, when the day is spent in feasting, drinking and gambling, are common amongst the young men. The older people have similar feasts in connection with their trade guilds, when it is not uncommon for some of the guests to hire a man to perform vicariously such heavy drinking as may be required by custom, and which, from some cause or other, they may be unable to accomplish themselves.

Lastly, as a mass the Chinese are a poor people ; the earnings of the lower orders being small, and their food principally rice.

Now that a people distinguished by such characteristics as the Chinese, viz. avarice, poverty, cruelty, excessive venery, liability to all kinds of disease, drunkenness, Buddhism, should become addicted to opium, certainly does not appear very wonderful ; for opium in its effects is exactly the agent to minister to minds so diseased. Under the magic influence of the drug the poor man, in imagination at least, becomes the possessor of wealth ; the last vestige of feeling and compassion is smothered by insensibility to physical pain ; at first at least the aphrodisiac properties of opium stimulate the sexual powers ; the more expensive and bulky liquor is not required when a little pill of opium will serve the purpose ; and lastly, an artificial Nirvana may be secured, which, as sleep simulates death, is the temporary counterpart of that real nirvana, the aim and hope of all true Buddhists. Northern races, compelled by the stern necessities of climate to maintain a more active existence, are not so likely to become opium eaters, as races living under different conditions ; especially those whose idea of eternal happiness is eternal stillness and rest. With these we may easily imagine the use of opium would be particularly seductive. The only wonder indeed is, that

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opium was not sooner extensively adopted by the Chinese.

The trade in opium did not, as many suppose, originate with the East India Company, but existed long before the British traded with China. Opium is known to have been carried to China by the Portuguese so early as the middle of the last century,\* and there is reason to believe that it was known, produced, and used in China at least two centuries before that time. It was not until 1773 that the East India Company made their first venture, and it was not until 1794 that the Chinese offered any objections to the trade, which afterwards, as a consequence of these objections, degenerated into smuggling. Indeed, comparatively little was heard of any remonstrance on the part of the Chinese Government to the importation of opium until about the year 1834. Up to this period commerce with China was conducted by the E. I. Company, but their charter expiring in that year, Lord Napier was sent by the British Government to superintend the trade. On his death Capt. Elliott became Superintendent, and a discussion arose whether the opium trade, which during years past had been carried on in an illegal manner, should be legalised or suppressed. Elliott was ordered by the Viceroy of Canton to send away the opium vessels, and their return was prohibited. Still the drug was smuggled into the country, until, in the early part of 1839, a special Commissioner, Lin, arrived with strict orders to suppress the traffic. His first step was to demand the surrender of all opium; his next was to place the chests containing the drug, 20,291 in number, valued at £ 2,000,000 sterling, in trenches filled with lime, in which the sea water was admitted, and the whole utterly ruined. The irritation consequent on this arbitrary action brought about the war of 1840-42 between England and China, commonly known as the "opium war." The second war of 1857 had nothing to do with opium, but originated from Commissioner Yeh seizing a vessel. At the termination of the Company's

\* Mossman's 'History of China.'

charter, in 1834, the importation of opium was annually 20,000 chests, by 1857 it had risen to 70,000, in value nearly £5,000,000 sterling. The present value (1879-80) was £12,993,979 (and the net revenue £7,250,000), the increase being the result of freedom both of importation and consumption.

The fulminations of the Chinese Government against the importation and the use of opium have certainly been both numerous and energetic. As the Chinese Emperors, a thousand years before the Christian era, condemned drunkenness and declared the most severe punishment to deter from that vice, so in almost exactly similar language the Chinese Emperors of the present century have condemned opium, and declared the most severe punishment to those indulging in the drug. And the high moral standing, *apparently* taken by a Chinese Emperor, in his declarations against the drug, has won the sympathy of a very large class of Englishmen. "I will not," said the Emperor of China, "make a revenue from the vices of my people;" death, banishment, forfeiture of property, the wooden collar, the bastinado, punishments often extended to sons and brothers, were the means by which it was sought to stop the sale and use of opium. When a man was detected in smoking, he was put to the torture until he gave up the name of the person who sold him the drug, and this agent was similarly dealt with until he told where he procured it. All this, and the peculiar circumstances of the Chinese people, their poverty, and the listless and objectless manner in which the Government was carried on, the sanguinary penal code, and the probability that opium saved the Chinese people from being a drunken nation, all this was forgotten in admiration of the high moral standard assumed in the words, "I will not derive a revenue from the vices of my people." But, unfortunately, there is much reason to conclude, that this high moral standard was either a wilful delusion and snare cast to the "outer barbarians," or otherwise the result of dense ignorance ; or repudiation

of the will and desires of the people—perhaps all three. There is great reason to believe that the high tone of morality assumed, was acted under very different influences to those arising from the deleterious effect on the masses of the Chinese people. So far back as 1838 Captain Elliot wrote: "There seems no reason to doubt that the Court has finally determined to suppress or to check the opium trade. The immense increase of the supply during the last four years, the rapid growth of the East Coast trade in opium, and the continual drain of silver, have no doubt greatly alarmed the Government." "If we can prevent the importation of opium, the exportation of sycee silver and dollars will cease of itself," was the idea of the Chinese Government. The Chinese Government are not one whit less avaricious than the people they profess to govern, and they are usurers to a very large extent, as money is lent to the salt and other merchants, for which a very high rate of interest is paid. The laws of China forbade the exportation of silver, and the difficulties of the Imperial Court once culminated in an inability to obtain silver for the repairs of the palace of Pekin (when, as previously mentioned, metal was taken from Buddhist temples). Accordingly, in various memorials—which is the Chinese way of expressing the views of Government—the necessity of checking the exportation of silver, consequent on the opium trade, is dilated on in powerful language, and the desirability of terrifying "the barbarians," "so that they may cease to bring opium and take away silver," is enforced. To add pungency to the observations, the memorialists asserted that the inland trade had materially decreased, owing to the constant call for silver to pay for the drug. "Cease sending us millions worth of opium," said the mandarin of Shanghai, "and our people will have more money to purchase your manufactures." Yet the history of our relations with China abundantly shows that, if possible, the Chinese Government would have

prevented *all* trade whatever with "foreign devils," doubtless for the same reasons that they would have stopped the opium trade, viz. because import trade of all kinds took silver from the country. Taking a mistaken view of political economy, a large party would have excluded all imports as tending to draw away wealth from the country. They would sell, but not buy; and if trade could have been conducted on such one sided principles, our relations with the Chinese Government would have doubtless been uniformly cordial. "Why should foreigners," they pleaded, "derive all this profit from imports?" But this pleading was shrouded by the cloak of an assumed high moral standard. "It is our principle," they said, "not to license what we condemn as immoral," and they gloried in their own assumed superiority as to the principles of their own Government, and pretended to scorn the Christian Governments that tolerated vices, and converted them into a source of pecuniary profit and public revenue. All this high moral sentiment has taken amazingly with those who only look on the surface! who will not understand that the silken slipper of morality often covers the cloven foot of self-interest.

The real grievance against the foreign opium trade is not that it demoralises the people, but that it drains off the country's supplies of silver. The Chinese Government, although not the people, have also another motive for desiring to abolish the opium trade with India. They smart under the recollection that treaties with the British were the result of victories gained by the British, and are the mementos of their own defeat and humiliation. The Chinese Government were not slow to perceive that "opium" was the word to inscribe on their banner of agitation. At the present time, although the Chinese Government may fix any tariff for the transit of opium *after* it has been landed, the tax on opium when first imported is fixed by treaty; and this rankles in the mind, and offends the dignity of the Celestial Court.

It was said above that the Chinese Government, in their decrees against the use of opium, repudiated the desires and will of the people. The history of the opium trade abundantly demonstrates that whatever the Chinese Government may do, *the Chinese people will have opium*. The Chinese evidently prefer opium as a stimulant to any form of alcoholic liquor, and when an engrossing taste of the kind is acquired by a nation, all forbidding laws must become a dead letter, and must be worse than useless. Why the Chinese people prefer opium to alcohol has, in some degree, been already explained, by cheapness and portability, and by its meeting, to a greater extent than alcohol would do, the characteristics of the nation. And the people who have not indulged both in ancient and modern times in some form of stimulant, have yet to be discovered. In the earlier part of the century, when the Government of China became alarmed at the constant flow of silver from the country, and sternly interdicted the passage of opium, smuggling of the drug flourished to an enormous extent. There was a demand, and in spite of all pains and penalties—even the penalty of death—the demand was met. At this early date the local government of Canton, by a long course of secret and deceitful practices in relation to the prohibited drug, had disabled itself from interfering, and smuggling went on against the open orders, but with the secret connivance, of the local authorities. At Lintin, Chinese were on several occasions shot with perfect impunity from smuggling ships, and on the appeal of relatives to the mandarins, the complicity of the latter always prevented justice being obtained. In 1840 a petitioner stated, “the local officers receive bribes to connive at the practice, and they are induced in the same way to desist from a commercial prosecution.” At a later date another petitioner states: “I have learned from scholars and commercial persons, that opium smoking exists in all the provinces, but the larger proportion of these are to be found in Government offices.” The police, influenced by the people in public offices, become

the secret purchasers of opium instead of labouring for its suppression. At length, notwithstanding laws of repression, the importation, the sale, and the use of opium was carried on openly, under what would be dignified in Europe by the term, "sovereign will of the people"—a will which many would apparently deny to the Chinese nation! Intelligent natives now estimate the proportion of opium consumers at 31 per cent. of the population, and under such circumstances some few may perhaps think with Sirr,\* that "it would be quite as impertinent in us to interfere as some would have us interfere, as for the Chinese to crusade against the enormous, and perhaps more deleterious, consumption of gin in England." Quite recently it is reported that at Loochow the people left the town, consequent on an order that opium houses should be closed.

The difficulty the Chinese laboured under in obtaining their chosen stimulant by importation, led, in spite of imperial decrees to the contrary, to the extensive cultivation of the poppy in China. It has been recently calculated that only one fifth of the opium used by the Chinese is foreign, that is, 80 per cent. is native, and as the quality of the native drug improves the disproportion will increase. Opium is now one of the principal products of the province of Sechuen, and opinions have been expressed, that in the course of time the product of this province alone† will affect the price of the Indian drug. Other provinces, as Yunnan, Mongolian Manchuria, and Kivei-chow, also grow much opium, most landholders cultivating small patches.‡ Proclamations are constantly issued by local magistrates, exhorting the people to cultivate cereals, and abandon opium for more useful crops, but as the officials are the chief consumers of the drug, and in addition derive a considerable revenue therefrom, these proscriptions are really intended only as the means of exacting

\* Sirr, 'China and the Chinese.'

† 'Blue Book.' Notes by Consular Agents.

‡ Caine, 'Opium Cultivation in China.'

money from the cultivator.\* At the present moment China rivals in amount the production of opium in India. The whole of the north-west, and the west of China, may be said to be practically independent of the Indian trade for the supply of opium. Into the *interior* of the empire the Indian drug rarely penetrates. With that duplicity which has marked the conduct of the Imperial Government, the cultivation of opium, although not formally legalised, was yet practically encouraged by the high tariff placed on the foreign drug. In Shanghai, Hankow, and Tien-tsin, notwithstanding a formal prohibition of the growth of native opium, taxes have been long regularly levied on it, and these taxes were 50 per cent. lower than those charged on foreign opium, so that the native growth was actually protected against the competition of its foreign rival. Still, however, Indian opium is allowed on all hands to be superior to the native growth, so much so, indeed, that a Chinaman will not willingly make use of the native drug if by paying a little higher price he can obtain the Indian variety. Native opium, it is alleged, possesses all the bad qualities of the Indian drug, with others of its own. It is reported to be coarser and more fiery than the Indian; its flavour is inferior, and it is thought to produce eruptions of the skin; and it is moreover said to be *more adulterated than* Indian opium. On this subject one of H.M. Consuls observes: "Climate and bodily condition seem to have a good deal of effect in the formation of local tastes. It will be noticed that in the more relaxing districts of the south, Bengal opium is mainly in favour, while in the colder districts of the north, inhabited by a ruder and more robust race, the more pungent Malwa is the favourite. This preference seems to be more marked where the Tartar element in the population is most developed."\* Under all these circumstances, notwithstanding the present superiority of the Indian drug, it seems very probable that as the cultivation in

\* Caine, *Ibid.*

† 'Blue Book.'

China progresses, and is more skilfully performed, the demand for the Indian drug will gradually lessen, and that the trade may leave us instead of, as some would have us do, ourselves abandoning the trade.

At present, however, as above mentioned, the Indian drug is universally preferred. As a rule, it is the poorer classes, who from necessity, not choice, use Chinese grown opium. It is from among these indigent classes—the habitués of opium “dens”—that the sensational accounts of opium smokers are pictured. From a class not only suffering from the effects of opium, but also the victims of want and disease, for the relief of which opium is taken. The results of such want and disease are *then* often attributed by ignorant sensational writers to the opium! But irrespective of the medley of symptoms detailed from thus mistaking and describing the results of want and disease for the effects of opium, it is found that the higher classes, those who always use Indian opium, do not ordinarily suffer in the manner in which they are sensationaly asserted to suffer. Neither do the opium eaters of India suffer in such a manner. It is, therefore, only reasonable to conclude that the China drug produces deleterious effects, which Indian opium does not excite. As there is wine and wine, spirits and spirits, so there is opium and opium. Wine which maketh glad the heart of man, and wine made of everything but grapes, which destroys his stomach. Spirits which in moderation are not only harmless but often beneficial, and spirits at three pence per glass which would corrode the inside of a stone statue: opium which in moderation may be used with impunity, and opium improperly cultivated, wrongly manufactured, or adultered, which, even in small quantities, is more or less injurious. As the Chinese *will* have opium, stopping the Indian supply, and thus forcing them to consume an inferior sample, seems calculated to be productive of greater harm than good.

The Imperial Government, the missionaries, and other sensational writers, have vied with each other in graphic

accounts of opium smoking and its results. Thus one Chinese petitioning official writes : "I have learned that those who use opium become its victims, with a periodical longing for it, which can only be assuaged by the application of the drug at the regular time ; and if they cannot obtain it when the daily period arrives, their limbs become debilitated, and discharge of rheum takes place from the eyes and nose, and they are altogether unequal to any exertion ; but on a few whiffs, their spirit and strength are immediately restored in a surprising manner. Thus opium becomes to opium-eaters the very life ; and when they are seized and brought before a magistrate, they will sooner suffer a severe chastisement than inform against those who sell it." Again, a series of Chinese pictures shows the opium-eater's progress in almost exactly the same manner as our own Hogarth portrayed the modern rake's progress ; the same scenes of dissipation, gambling, and harlotry being common to both series. Yet, while the Chinese sketches are looked upon by certain classes with pious horror, Hogarth's pictures are, as often as not, regarded simply with amusement, on the principle, it may be presumed, which causes the Jellybys of the period to expend their energies in the production of pocket handkerchiefs for South Sea Islanders while they neglect the wants of their fellow beings at home. There is abundance of scope for their energy, no further removed even than Ratcliff Highway, but perhaps this is too dangerous a locality to penetrate unless under the protection of the police.

A British author writes : "The man or woman who gives way to this pernicious habit is lost. His eyes become sunken and vacant, his hands tremble, his form betrays symptoms of permanent decrepitude, and his intellectual faculties decay. Nothing can stop him, he becomes insensible to everything, neither poverty nor hunger can stimulate him to exertion, and he perishes like the beasts of the field."

" In most places opium, or in missionary language

"Chinese curse," is consumed in tea houses, and some of these tea houses are in boats; but seeing that a large Chinese population always live in boats, why the fact of opium houses being in boats should be brought forward as an additional horror, is not very clear. Tea houses where opium is supplied are thus described: "The traveller sees dark and filthy *dens*, where haggard men, lying on dirty mats, smoke opium. Most generally the opium houses are in obscure streets of the town; all kinds of people congregate in these wretched places, and while smoking amuse themselves with looking at dissolving views of sacred subjects, or of indecent and disgusting ones." Why the fact of low opium houses being in obscure streets should be specially and prominently dwelt upon, is also not very evident. There are opium houses and gin palaces, and it is as unfair to make it appear that all opium houses are obscure dens, as it would have been unfair to describe all gin shops in similar terms a quarter of a century ago, before gas and gilt rendered the gin palaces of St. Giles luminous and as magnificent as the liquor shops of the more respectable parts of London. A few years ago, even if not now, there were hundreds of "boozing kens" in London, or indeed in every large English town, as dirty, as filthy, as obscure, and as disgusting in character as any opium shop in China.

A curious instance of the propensity to condemn opium because it is taken in "dens" is to be found in Mr W. G. Marshall's 'Through Canada' (1881), in which an opium house is sensationaly described as in Chinatown of San Francisco. But it is also stated that not only is a heavy fine imposed on a Chinaman keeping an opium house, but a penalty of fifty dollars attaches even to a white man found entering one. Under such restrictions, as the Chinaman will have opium wherever he is, he is obliged to take it in secret, and secrecy of the kind naturally implies "dens." This is, however, the fault of the authority, not of the Chinaman or of the opium.

Chinamen do not desire to take their opium in dens any more than an Englishman wishes to take his beer or liquor in "dens."

Another author writes: "In the hours devoted to their ruin, these infatuated people may be seen at nine o'clock of every evening in all the different stages of opium inebriation; some entering half distracted to feed the craving appetite they have been obliged to subdue during the day; others laughing and talking under the effects of the pipe, while the couches around are filled with their different occupants, who lie languid whilst an idiotic smile on their countenance proves them too completely under the influence of the drug to regard passing events, and fast merging into the wished-for consummation. The last scene of this tragic play is generally a room in the rear of the building—a species of morgue or dead house—where lie those who have passed into that stage of bliss the opium-eater madly seeks—an emblem of the long sleep to which he is blindly hurrying." Now, the first portion of this sensational description would certainly apply with equal force to a British gin palace; any one who thinks proper to visit a London, or Birmingham, or Manchester, or Liverpool, or Glasgow gin shop, will see not only a fac-simile of much of the scene portrayed above, but even something worse! He will see the haggard wretch who has waited till evening rush in for the accustomed quantum of blue ruin, he will see men, and women also, in every stage of intoxication, from the maudlin sentimental to the dead drunk, not certainly reclining on couches, but very frequently wallowing on the floor! He may not see revolving views of sacred subjects, or indecent pictures, but he will see indecency enough displayed by the prostitute class, who, like the men, in every stage of intoxication, will surely be there. And he will be fortunate if he does not witness what seldom occurs in an opium house, viz. a quarrel often ending in a fight and bodily injury.

Not only will he see this at nine o'clock in the evening,

but he will find more or less of similar scenes enacted all day long. There may not be a room at the rear, sensationaly described as a *morgue*, in which customers sleep off their intoxication, but he will see persons in every stage of ineptitude *turned out into the streets*, or marched off by the police to the nearest lock-up, from which they are brought before the magistrate at the Police Court next morning, with the charge "drunk and disorderly" entered against their names in the police sheet. There are drinking houses in Calcutta, and there are drinking houses in Bombay, worthy of description in quite as sensational terms as any opium house in China, and in which drunken scenes occur nightly at least as distressing and disgusting as anything happening in a Chinese opium house. Indeed, there are opium houses in London, one of which has been sensationaly described in 'Edwin Drood.'

It is from the sensational and highly coloured accounts of opium *dens*, and of the *habitués* of such places, that it is sought to impress the British public with the deleterious effects of the drug. The Chinese, or any other public, might be similarly horrified by accounts of British gin palaces. It would be well if sensational writers first plucked the beam out of our own eye, before they attempted to extricate the mote from their neighbours!

Confessedly the practice of using opium, in common with indulgence in alcohol, exerts sufficiently deleterious influences, but when writers go on to attribute the amount of pauperism prevailing in China to this cause alone, or principally to this cause, it is assuredly time to cry "hold enough!" Yet this has been done by a recent writer, who thus discourses: "It is therefore easy to account for so vast an amount of pauperism among a people such as the Chinese. In every town the number of mendicants is enormous. At the corners of the streets, at every public place, are seen crowds of miserable wretches exposing their deformities, their wounds, and their dislocated limbs, to excite the commiseration of the passers-by;

numbers of them being in every stage of starvation. They have no homes, but erect miserable huts outside the pagodas and other large buildings made of any scraps of linen or matting they can pick up in the streets." But mendicity of the kind is not confined to Chinese towns! It is common to all Eastern cities where European influence is not predominant, as the streets of Constantinople, of Alexandria, of Bagdad, and of innumerable other places abundantly testify. It may not be said that opium eating, like alcohol drinking, does not conduce to mendicity; but to attribute mendicity in China to opium eating as the principal cause, is special pleading, as absurd, to those who know the East, as untrue. The Chinese are admittedly a poor people, and amongst the enormous population mendicity would flourish even if opium were unknown. It is indeed (like Romeo's apothecary) their poverty and not their will, which drives many to opium; otherwise the more expensive liquor or wine would probably be preferred. Although most writers describing opium houses in China choose night for the scene they paint, some have portrayed the opium shop in the morning, when under the "garish light of day," dirt, wretchedness, squalor, misery, and those who having taken "too much" and still cumber the divans, appear in undisguised hideousness. As for the dirt, the lower orders of Chinese are characteristically dirty, having, like the great Lexicographer, "no passion for clean linen." And as for the wretchedness, squalor, and misery, as seen unshrouded in the naked daylight—circumstances alter cases. Even in civilised society the morning after a large party does not seem specially cheerful to those who revisit the scene of their merriment over night, before the débris has been removed. "Treading the halls of festive glee," "tripping lightly as one goes," has not exactly the same effect as opening the shutters next morning, and letting daylight in on the litter and confusion a number of people always leave behind! A Chinese opium shop, like a British gin palace, must necessarily appear more forlorn in the morning, than when warmly lighted

up as an inviting contrast to the evening darkness. Fortunately we have other eye-witnesses, who have pictured Chinese opium houses and Chinese opium smoking in a less sensational, and as may be surmised, in a more generally truthful manner, than the authors already quoted. Dr. Gordon for example, in his 'China from a Medical Point of View,' describes an opium eating house, and opium smoking, without considering it necessary to emphasise his account by portraying in forcible language the lowest and exceptional phase of the matter.

This part of the subject may perhaps be appropriately concluded by a brief account of the manner in which opium is taken by the Chinese. It is smoked in a different manner from tobacco, the pipe consisting of a tube resembling a German flute in size and thickness. In one end of it is fixed a bowl which communicates with the hollow of the stem. The opium, which is in the form of black paste, is prepared for smoking by seizing a little ball, the size of a pea, with a fine needle, and heating it over a lamp until it swells and acquires a certain consistency. It is then moulded into a conical form and placed in the bowl of the pipe. The smoker holding it to the flame of the lamp, takes three or four deep inspirations, ejecting the vapour through his nostrils. A few puffs exhaust the opium in the bowl, which has to be replenished. The Chinese smoker usually lies down while he smokes.

It has been said that the people of the East smoke opium as the people of the West smoke tobacco; but this is a mistake. The tobacco smoker usually emits the smoke from his mouth; but the inveterate opium smoker seldom emits the smoke from his mouth, but usually through his nostrils, after, as it is termed, "swallowing it," or really inhaling it into the lungs. If the opium pipe is smoked as the tobacco pipe is smoked, the effects of the opium are very inconsiderable as compared with the results when the novice has attained to perfection in

the practice. This however, it is said, takes some time for many to accomplish, and some, like those taking liquor or tobacco for the first time, are so sickened by the process that they fortunately become disgusted and do not become habituated to the opium pipe.

## ARTICLE III

THE effects of opium on the system may now be more particularly considered. Sirr describes the effects as follows :—" Physically the effects of opium on the enslaved victim is almost beyond the power of language to portray. It not only enslaves its votaries, but destroys their bodies, and commits such fearful ravages in its progress that the mental powers are wholly paralysed and the consumers are conducted onwards from one crime to another. The habitual use of this drug terminates the smoker's life in about five years, and he may readily be identified by his lank and shrivelled limbs, tottering gait, sallow visage, feeble voice, and death-boding glance of his eye. These are so superlative in their degree, and so closely blended in their union, that they at once bespeak him to be the most forlorn creature that treads the earth. The offspring of the opium-eaters may always be known by their emaciated appearance and imbecile mind. Thus, unborn generations are doomed to suffer for the misfortunes of their parents and the aggrandisement of heartless traders. A few days of this fearful luxury, when taken to excess, will impart a pallid and haggard look to the features, and a few months or even weeks will change strong and healthy men into little better than idiot skeletons. The pain they suffer on days without the drug, after long habit, no language can explain."

Lin, the Commissioner, summed up the effects of opium under these heads : 1.—Loss of appetite. 2.—Loss of strength. 3.—Loss of money. 4.—Loss of time. 5.—Loss of longevity. 6.—Loss of virtue, leading to profligacy and gambling.

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Now it may be at once admitted, that the effects of an *excessive* use of opium are scarcely exaggerated in the above descriptions. Indeed the fact that opium eventually induces bowel complaints, as dysentery and diarrhoea, and rheumatic pains, might have been added to complete the sensational picture. But that such results follow other than the excessive use of opium is not the truth. The career of the drunkard has been sketched in quite as forcible a manner, but not even the most enthusiastic teetotaller would affirm that the description of the drunkard is applicable to all who use fermented liquors. Yet this is practically exactly what the writers against opium would have us believe. They describe the results of excessive indulgence in opium, not as the condition of the opium drunkard, but as the normal state of all who use opium. This is certainly a dishonest course, and must, in the long run, tend to render what is advanced less potent than it otherwise would be. If any one asserted that all who drank fermented liquor acquired the blotched and purple skin, the crimson nose, the bleared and watery eyes, the staggering gait, the stomach dyspepsia, the nutmeg liver of the drunkard, ending in delirium tremens, or as it has been called "the sleep agitated by furies"—if any one advanced so preposterous an assertion, he would be regarded as designedly promulgating an untruth. Yet the writings against opium, in which the *opium drunkard* is pictured, have been in many quarters accepted as applicable to every one using opium!

Perhaps, at first sight, the most forcible argument against the use of opium which can be advanced, is that adopted by a Chinese resident in London, in his letters to the 'Times,' in 1875. The question whether opium is injurious he answers with a decided affirmative, supporting himself by the fact, that "it is included in the schedule of poisons to the British Pharmacy Act." There is certainly no denying that opium is a poison; but so also is alcohol if taken in sufficient quantity. Moreover both tea and coffee contain very virulent poisonous

alkaloids ; so also does tobacco ; and so also do certain other materials in common use as articles of consumption. Again, although opium is a poison, it acts very differently on different constitutions. There are people who, as Ophelia says of her rue, take the opium with a difference. While so small a quantity as four grains of crude opium has killed an adult, and one-eighth of a grain has killed an infant six months old, other people have taken enormous quantities with impunity. Thus it is on record that Dean Milner took thirty-four grains daily to 850 drops of laudanum ; De Quincey took 12,000 drops of laudanum in a day, and a medical man took thirty-four grains of opium every day for a considerable period. Lahrbrush, a Londoner, took to opium in 1807 for diarrhoea, and continued the practice in India, eating at the rate of ninety grains *per diem*, and continuing in good health for seventy years. Occasionally children also evince an extraordinary tolerance.

We are not, however, now occupied in considering peculiar idiosyncrasies which cause some to "faint of a rose in aromatic pain," others to grow sick on the approach of a cat, and enable others to eat opium or arsenic as if "to the manner born." But it is the ordinary effect, on ordinary people, we desire to trace, and to see how far those writers against opium are correct in the conclusions they would have us accept.

Thus we are told that opium enslaves its victims, and that a person who has once, even Actæon-like, unawares, inhaled the seductive vapour, has crossed a barrier as impassable from the other side as the Styx, and is ever after a slave to the habit. We are told that the inscription of L'Inferno should be placed on the door of every opium shop, "Who enter here, leave hope behind!" And we are taught to believe that there is a thick and blinding fog for ever hanging over the fatally easy slope which leads to the opium house Avernus—the Morgue—whereby the victim cannot perceive what progress he has made upon the dreadful downward road. In short, we

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are called upon to accept a statement that when a person has once tasted opium it becomes the Ultima Thule of his life ; that continuing the practice or giving it up is equally impracticable and dangerous, the victim existing like a modern Phlegas or Damocles in daily danger of destruction by the dull stone weight of continuance, or by the sharper sword of abstinence. It will, however, be recollected that it is proverbially a traveller's habit to exaggerate the war-paint of his Indian friends. And we take leave to deny the sweeping assertion that the habit of opium eating or smoking cannot be overcome ; supporting the position by the authority of a Chinaman himself, who has already been referred to as the author of certain letters to the 'Times' in 1875. He writes : "But I assert that the habit of opium smoking is not in any case irremediable. I grant that the difficulty of breaking it off is very great, but it is not insuperable. I have not yet seen or heard of a case where a confirmed opium smoker could not reform himself if he had been compelled to leave off his vicious habit by necessity or from determined resolution. A case bearing upon this point is vividly before my mind. Some years ago, a well-to-do Chinese, who was an inveterate opium smoker, and who had, in consequence, become very thin and delicate in health, was convicted of a crime in Hong-Kong, and sentenced to a long term of imprisonment. When the sentence was passed on the offender, all his friends and relatives predicted that if ever there should be a man who would die from deprivation of opium, that man certainly would, because he had been in the habit for the past ten years of taking an allowance of five or six mace weight every day, and even when he happened to have a less quantity he felt languid and sick. However, their fears were proved to be groundless, for he underwent his gaol discipline pretty fairly, though he was sick for some time in gaol ; and when he came out, he was healthy and strong, and, in fact, became, physically speaking, an altered man. On being jocularly asked one day how he

liked the gaol he had been in, he replied, 'For one thing I like it very much; it has cured me of the confirmed habit of smoking opium. I wish all you opium smokers would go there too, for it would do you good.'"

Similarly Dr. Ayres, who was Colonial Surgeon at Hong-Kong, states, that when offenders are committed to gaol their allowance of opium is frequently stopped altogether, and no evil results ensue. The same has also been observed in those Indian gaols where opium-eaters are not permitted to continue the habit. In the 'Lancet' for June, 1879, a series of cases are recorded of the habit of taking large doses of opium or morphia being discontinued.

De Quincey says: "Some months are necessary for that." (A permanent habit of opium eating.) "Making allowances for constitutional differences, I should say that in less than 120 days no habit of opium eating could be proved strong enough to call for any extraordinary self-conquest in renouncing it, and even suddenly renouncing it. On Saturday you are an opium-eater, on Sunday no longer such." De Quincey renounced opium on four separate occasions for long intervals, and finally "resumed it upon the warrant of his enlightened and deliberate judgment as of two evils very much the least," the evils being, mental and physical suffering, which the opium relieved. Even eight years' practice, he says, was not sufficient to make opium necessary to him as an article of diet. Doolittle,\* who is certainly not a friend to opium-eaters, states: "If he smokes at irregular intervals, as once in a week, and then once in a day, and then goes for a longer or shorter period before he smokes again, he will not feel an ardent longing."

Next we have the statement that the habitual use of this drug terminates life in about five years: If so, there must be some peculiar idiosyncrasy in every Chinaman's constitution. Such is certainly *not* the case either in Turkey, or in India, in which latter country opium is

\* Doolittle, 'Social Life of the Chinese,' 1866.

consumed to a much greater extent than has perhaps been yet realised. We personally are acquainted with natives of India who have taken opium from boyhood, and who at forty, fifty, or even the grand climacteric of sixty-three, are hale and hearty as any of their fellows. We once had a servant, who had been an opium-eater from "his youth upwards." He contracted the habit in the first Affghan war, and he marched with us many thousand miles, year by year, over the semi-desert districts of Western Rajpootana. Although the opium pipe was this man's nightly solace, he never neglected his work, or failed to appear at that unpleasant hour in the very early morning at which long marches through heavy sand rendered riding a necessity; and he never forgot to have every article required in its proper place. This recalls to mind De Quincey's old gentleman with "a snow white beard," and who ate ample doses of opium, and was yet able to deliver very weighty counsel on the bad effects of the practice; and who, De Quincey justly observes, "is but an indifferent evidence that opium either kills people prematurely, or sends them into a mad house." The fact is, that opium only shortens the lives of those who (in the same manner as many Europeans consume gin) use the drug excessively, or as a substitute for food. It therefore follows that, as a rule, it is the lives of the poor and needy which are shortened by opium. Doolittle tells us, that well-to-do Chinamen smoke opium in moderation all their lives without injury, which indeed accords with experience in other countries.

Next we are called upon to believe that the opium consumer is betrayed by his emaciated appearance, lank and shrivelled limbs, tottering gait, sallow visage, feeble voice, and general imbecility. All this, however, refers to the excessive use of the drug. The servant mentioned above was certainly not more imbecile than most of his compeers; the natives of India referred to above are, as a class, among the most physically powerful men we have met with in India—men who will ride their fifty, eighty,

or even a hundred miles under the burning sun of the "Land of Death," as Marwar from its sterile sandy aspect has been termed. To the "kossid," again, obliged to travel long distances in a short space of time, opium is invaluable. The court hurkarus, especially of Bickaneer, Joudpoor, and of some of the other native states, were celebrated for the distance and speed with which they travel. They go without food, they endure without water, and they abjure sleep, being supported to their journey's end by an occasional pill of the opium they carry with them in a small tin box. When used by the impoverished ryot, it occupies the void resulting from insufficient food, or from food deficient in the necessary alimentary substances, and it affords to him not only a taste of that exhilaration of spirits which in other countries might be aroused by liquor, but it also enables him to undergo his daily fatigues with far less waste of tissue than would otherwise occur—or in other words, it adds to his physical strength. On shooting excursions the opium-eater often passes along apparently insensible to heat or fatigue, while others toil under the blazing sun, looking out as much for the next pool or well of water as to the immediate work of beating for game. Similarly, the camel drivers, "when on the patient camel's desert march the fore foot draws the hinder," support their strength, from early night to early morn, with the little opium ball from the inevitable tin box.

Then again in the extensive camel-breeding districts of Western India, the principal characteristics of which are a succession of sand-hills covering thousands of square miles, the men tending the camels are enabled to withstand the fierce heats by day, and in the winter season the bitter cold of night, by the use of opium. A little grain taken from the distant villages into the wilderness and camel's milk is their sustenance for months; the daily dose of opium enabling them to bear the solitudes, and the physical exertion and extremes of temperature to which they are subjected when tending the herds of

breeding camels, which forms the only wealth of the district. De Quincey notices one of the effects of opium to be to "sustain through twenty-four consecutive hours the else drooping animal energies under any call for extraordinary exertion such as all men meet at times." H.M. Consul at Newchang also says, "he himself has been in company with a Manchu sportsman who took nothing during the day but a pill or two of his home-grown opium."

The stimulating effects of opium on the physical powers, is also often taken advantage of when animals are required to undergo extraordinary fatigue. Burnes, in his Narrative of a Visit to the Court of Scindia,<sup>1</sup> notices that opium was then given to horses to excite them to greater exertion. Burnes says: "A Cutchee horseman shares very honorably his store of opium with his horse, which then makes incredible stretches, although wearied out before." The influence of opium on animals is well understood throughout Western India, but in our experience it is more frequently given mixed with alum to riding camels than to horses, when these animals are required to perform a long and speedy journey.

Again we are asked to believe that "*atra cura*" is the consequence of indulgence, that opium depresses the spirits, rendering the person melancholy, and not unfrequently imbecile, or even insane. The foregoing certainly tends to show that this is not the case. On this point De Quincey observes: "For ten years, during which I took opium, the day succeeding was always a day of unusually good spirits;" and he tells us, that opium instead of producing inactivity or torpor, often led him to frequent public places, such as markets and theatres. Doolittle again states: "Friends often invite each other to smoke opium as *preliminary* to the discussion of business"—the reverse of what obtains at home, where the glass generally succeeds the business conversation. It is not likely that the Chinese would use opium just previous to business discussions if opium dulled the intellect!

We are also told, that opium leads to wretchedness, brawls, loss of property and poverty. Taken in excess, there is no doubt that it leads to neglect of business and poverty; but that all who consume opium "come to grief" in such a manner, is not to be believed. Neither is brawling and quarrelling usual as a result of the influence of opium on the mind. Gordon states, "I have witnessed much wretchedness and want among the victims of this vice, but neither in a greater degree, nor among a larger proportion of the people as are similarly debased in the United Kingdom through the evil consequences of the indulgence in spirits; and Consul Gibbs in 'Chinese Sketches' observes, "opium smokers I have seen in all stages of intoxication, but no drunken brawls, no bruised or bleeding wives."

A great point, as showing the deleterious influence of opium has been made of the fact, that there are numerous remedies for the effects of opium smoking, advertised by Chinese physicians and others. It is argued that the injurious effects of the vice are thus rendered more patent, as the Chinese themselves discern the necessity of means for counteracting the effects of the evil. Only recently a sympathetic Englishman has offered a prize of £50 for the best essay on the medical means of counteracting the effects of opium smoking among the Chinese. While hoping that this effort may be successful, we may doubt if there are any medical means by which the effects of opium smoking may be cured or even retarded. Moral means are the principal means, and such measures must tend towards the abandonment of the habit,—not to the cure of its effects. The fact of the Chinese having presumed panaceas against the effects of opium smoking may be regarded in much the same light as our own remedies against the evils of drink. Scarcely an English newspaper can be taken up which does not contain advertisements unblushingly setting forth the value of various nostrums in counteracting the effects of dissipation and excess. And homes or asylums for dipsomaniacs

abound throughout the land. There are physicians indeed who specially apply their talents in this direction. Although the Chinese have medicines for opium smokers, and although Chinese physicians profess to cure opium smokers, it does not appear that the Chinese have yet regarded the evil so destructive as to necessitate asylums for those indulging in opium. Neither do we learn that the Chinese have yet thought it desirable to portray, as a warning, the career of the opium smoker in their theatrical entertainments, as for instance, the career of the drunkard has been recently displayed in "Drink," at the Princess's Theatre.

Perhaps, however, the most astounding assertion which has been made as regards the deleterious effects of opium is that its use is rapidly destroying the Chinese nation—an assertion not intended to be accepted metaphorically, but literally. The Chinese nation is not to degenerate like "ancient Rome majestic in decay," but it is to disappear from the face of the earth. According to the doleful prophecies of some writers we might be almost justified in believing that in the course of a few years only two Chinese will be left, who, like Deucalion and Pyrrha after the deluge, the sole survivors of their race, will wander disconsolately through the grass grown ruins of depopulated cities until they sink too into Nirvana! The utter absurdity of such assertions reminds one of the famous theatrical performance as promised by the stage manager, "Ali will take a lighted torch and jump down the throat of his brother Muli; Muli will take a lighted torch and jump down the throat of his brother Hassan; Hassan will take a lighted torch and jump down his own throat, leaving the spectators in total darkness!" The modern history of the Chinese nation certainly does not justify any such sweeping conclusions. The Chinese are essentially, in some senses, a progressive, if not, indeed, an aggressive people, as both British Colonies and American States, and recently the Russians even, bear witness. It is as likely that the trees will some time sweep the stars

down, as that Chinese nationality will be destroyed by opium. The disappearance of lives caused by opium are but ripples on the immense ocean of Chinese humanity, and would scarcely affect the vital statistics, were any compiled for the Chinese empire. At one time it was prophesied that tobacco would destroy European nations. Both James I and Pope Urban III prohibited the use of tobacco in almost as bitter terms as the Chinese emperors have inveighed against opium. James I said :—" It is a custome loathsome to the eye, hatefull to the nose, harmefull to the braine, dangerous to the lungs, and in the blacke stinkinge fume thereof neerest resembling the horrible Stygian smoake of the pitte that is bottomeless ;" and Urban prohibited the use of tobacco, under any circumstances, under the penalty of excommunication. Francisco De Sevira, of Cordova, in Spain, also assailed tobacco with as vigorous a counterblast as was directed against it by our own " British Solomon," prophesying the ruin of the nation by indulgence in what the Wahabees even now call the " unclean herb." Yet notwithstanding that this opposition has extended over centuries, as evidenced by a comparatively recent controversy in the ' Lancet,' and notwithstanding the vehemence of inconsiderate declaimers, and the moderation of others, still the smoking of tobacco has extended, and is extending, amongst all classes of society ; evidenced by the enormous revenue of some six millions sterling which the British nation now expends on this perhaps the least defensible, but not the most pernicious of its luxuries. Tobacco has been stated to impair the vital and physical energy, to induce dyspepsia, to impair the generative organs, and to cause mental disease ; but in spite of all, the will of the people has triumphed over authoritative and professional denunciations of tobacco in European countries as the will of the people has triumphed as regards opium in China. Tea, again, was not introduced into general use without much opposition. Treatises have been published showing that its effects are injurious, and it was ridiculed under

the term of "hay water." Doubtless excessive indulgence in either tea or tobacco is injurious; but this fact has not diminished the consumption of these articles.

It has already been remarked that opium is exactly the agent to minister to the principal national characteristics of the Chinese. It was mentioned that under the influence of opium in imagination the poor man becomes the possessor of wealth; the last vestige of feeling or compassion is smothered by insensibility to physical pain; at first, at least, the aphrodisiac properties of opium stimulate the sexual powers; the more expensive and bulky liquors are not required when a little pill of opium will serve the purpose; and, lastly, an artificial Nirvana may be secured, which, as sleep simulates death, is the temporary counterpart of that true Nirvana—the aim and hope of every true Buddhist. Some, however, originally resort to the drug for the relief of neuralgia, or toothache, or rheumatism, or for some other painful disease. Some investigations, presently referred to more particularly, made by the writer, as to the effects of opium eating in Rajpootana, showed that the comparative proportion of opium-eaters was greatest among those suffering from painful affections. There is, indeed, much reason to believe that the maladies for which opium is taken, have been regarded by unprofessional observers as complaints caused by opium. For instance, the Chinese are very subject to scrofulous sores, especially the poor and needy. Want and pain cause such persons to take opium. Unprofessional writers, not being able to recognise a scrofulous sore from any other ulcer, jump to the conclusion that the disease is caused by opium, and assert accordingly. Exactly the same is the case as regards skin diseases and various other complaints. Opium is credited with producing *that* for the relief of which it is taken! Most of us have felt when suffering the hideous throes of toothache that it would be a relief to have the earache or the rheumatism, that variety even in torture would be agreeable, and it is scarcely matter of surprise

that poor Chinamen, who have no public hospitals to fly to for the relief of suffering, should take what ease they may obtain from opium.

It has been already noticed that the sanitary condition of Chinese towns is deplorably bad, while the food of the lower classes consists chiefly of inferior and often diseased rice. The lines of Tennyson are indeed applicable to Chinese life in many of their cities.

"In reeking dungeons, over steaming sewers  
Fed with rank heat, that crawled upon the tongue,  
And putrid water every drop a worm  
Until they died of rotted limbs."

Conditions of existence which are certainly not favorable to the *mens sana in corpore sano*, and which reduce the crime of obtaining temporary oblivion by opium to a minimum.

Perhaps the most injurious use to which opium is applied is the practice of dosing children with it,—a habit which obtains not only in China, but to a large extent in India also. But here again excuse may be pleaded! Poor native females in China, and in India also, have not the opportunity as mothers in Europe enjoy, of giving their children opium under the legalised patent-medicine guise of "soothing syrups," "cordials," or "elixirs." They therefore quiet the fractious or sick child with a little watery solution of the drug, or in India with a little of the *umal-pawnee* prepared for the father. Doubtless, if the truth were known, not a few children die under such treatment, as not a few children die in Great Britain from the syrups, cordials, and elixirs used to *soothe* them. The number of inquests held in England on children thus succumbing, is small in comparison with the actual number dying, either directly or indirectly, from the effects of one or other of the patent legalised nostrums containing opium. Here is a legitimate opening for philanthropical enterprise. But we suppose as patented medicines containing opium

pay a considerable revenue to the State, and as Britons do not appreciate too much interference with "the liberty of the subject," philanthropists would prefer still expending their energies on China. Menander said, "whom the gods love die young." If so, the gods must have much affection for the children of the British poor, among whom, especially in the large towns, the mortality is enormous. The little care displayed by Chinese mothers for their sick children, has been referred to in the earlier part of this article. British mothers are certainly not quite so neglectful in this respect as Chinese mothers. But the small care which appears to be taken for infant life even in Europe, might almost justify the belief that if children are not, as in China, regarded as downright encumbrances to be got rid of when troublesome, they are at least often looked upon as "chronic perplexities which, like accommodation bills, have matured unawares."

But many Chinamen simply take opium because it is the *fashion* to do so. Doolittle says it is the popular way of "treating." A person asks his friends to opium exactly in the same manner as an Englishman asks his friend "what he will have," or an American "to liquor." A similar practice obtains in Rajpootana, where opium is used in the form of solution or "umal-pawnee." It is frequently thus taken as a stirrup cup at the commencement of a journey. We have ourselves tasted "umal-pawnee," the solution being offered and received as a token of friendship and good feeling. It is drank cold, not in the manner De Quincey took it, viz. "a glass of opium negus warm." In China mercantile firms often keep opium on hand for their customers, and it is stated that a Chinese physician usually expects and receives an invitation to opium when calling on his patients. Many private families keep the opium pipe in readiness for the demands of fashion, having a room devoted to the smoking of the drug, as we find smoking rooms in many English houses. If only the Chinese had no other excuse for smoking opium than the Juggernath of fashion, there

are not very many, even among Britons, able to cast the stone straight owing to the beam in their own eye ! We are all only too familiar with those agonies of dress, of deportment, of conversation, of visiting, endured daily for the sake of our own dear Christian Juggernaut of fashion. All in turn have been stretched on this social rack. The agonies of, and dangers from, dress for instance, as undergone by women, would, if endured in a good cause, be little short of sublime, and would probably among savage nations entail canonization as martyrs ! Fashion indeed rules the upper classes of society with an iron hand, and if it were the fashion to take opium, as it was formerly the fashion to drink, the drug would be taken notwithstanding anything to be said against it. Neither can this ruling power be limited to that usually termed fashionable society. For if the term "custom" be used instead of fashion, a similar all-powerful influence is found pervading all classes of society—an influence from which there is no escape. As Wordsworth observes :

"Custom hangs upon us with a weight,  
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life.

In addition to fashion and custom, there is what Doolittle describes as the "bewitching influence of the drug." Few, he says, have the fortitude to bear up against the fascinations of opium ; to which De Quincey gives the possession of the "Keys of Paradise;" turning, like Midas, all things to gold ; interdicting all pain and anxiety ; recalling recollections of the most pleasant periods of life ; stimulating all capacities of enjoyment ; terminating in that passive repose which, according to both Epictetus and Bhudda, constitutes happiness, arousing, in short, the *Divinæ particulæ auræ* to a greater degree than any other known agent. Under the influence of opium, for example, the poetic mind may be on the sands before Troy, with white-crested Olympus towering on the horizon, and the blue sea washing at the feet. Or it may be again with

Curtius, driving his war steed headlong into the Gulf ; or with Leonidas, willing to sup with Pluto, so that he turned the Persian myriads back from the devoted handful that held the pass of Thermopylæ ; or with Horatius and his trusty twain, the pride of Rome :

“The three who kept the bridge so well!  
In the brave days of old.”

The bucolic mind may be with Virgil under the spreading shade of the mighty beech ; may hear the lowing of the distant cattle, or the pitiful tunes of the herdsman’s pipe. But all the dreams of the opium-eater are passive, if not always of peace ; and as mentioned elsewhere, quarrelling and brawling forms no part of the effect. Both Epicurus and Aristippus declared that pleasure constituted happiness. All animals instinctively pursue it and as instinctively avoid pain. The sages of old held that man should do deliberately that which animals do instinctively. And without endorsing this doctrine, it may be advanced that there is no valid reason why human beings should suffer from hunger, pain, or mental inquietude, when the moderate use of a vegetable production of the bountiful earth will materially ameliorate such sufferings. Every “herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed,” has been given to us “for meat ;” and a crusade against the legitimate and moderate use of opium is not justified by any law, human or divine.

Unfortunately human beings as a mass, and especially uncivilised or semi-civilised human beings, do not deny themselves pleasures of the present, as a consequence of the fear of the miseries of the future. As the drunkard is undeterred in Europe, so is the opium consumer in China. Not all the warnings and denunciations directed to both classes, will suffice to turn them from evil to good. As Thersites remarked to Patroclus, “they profited not much by the talk.” Yet enthusiasts appear to fancy

this earth may still become the home of the gods, and that Pandora's casket may be again filled and locked by their exhortations ! Perhaps, however, the opium-eater or smoker has better excuse for his practice than any the drunkard can offer.

According to all accounts the pleasures of opium smoking are superior, and of a higher order than those derived from drink. Doolittle, as above quoted, speaks of the "bewitching influence of the drug," and De Quincey mentions its subtle powers as "tranquillising all irritations of the nervous system, and stimulating the capacities of enjoyment." If the effects on the system of spirits are compared with those of opium it will be found that while the former maddens and excites, the latter soothes and tranquillises. This effect is of longer duration, and more equable, than the effects of spirits. Ardent spirits are often taken to excite "Dutch courage," or to stimulate to the commission of violent and bloody deeds, but opium is not smoked nor eaten for such a purpose, as its tendency is to produce a condition of system in which, although acts of cruelty may be passively permitted, or even enjoyed, no active or passionate action is aroused. De Quincey says: "The main distinction lies in this, that whereas wine disorders the mental faculties, opium, on the contrary, if taken in a proper manner, introduces among them the most exquisite order, legislation, and harmony. Wine robs a man of his self-possession, opium sustains and re-enforces it. . . . In short, to sum up all in one word, a man who is inebriated or tending to inebriety, is in a condition which calls up into supremacy the merely human, too often the brutal, part of his nature, but the opium-eater finds that the divine part of his nature is paramount." The author of the seven curses of London designates drink as the "crowning curse." "It is impossible to exaggerate," he writes, "impossible even truthfully to paint, the effects of this evil, either on those who are addicted to it, or on those who suffer from it; crushed husbands, broken-hearted wives, and most of all,

those poor innocent children that are dying under cruelty and starvation, that shiver in their rags upon our streets, that walk unshod the winter snows, and with their matted hair, and hollow cheeks, and sunken eyes, glare out on us wild and savage-like from their patched and filthy windows. Nor is the curse confined to the lowest stratum of society ; much improved as are the habits of the upper and the middle classes, the vice may still be met in all classes of society. It has cost many a servant her place, and ruined her virtue ; it has broken the bread of many a tradesman ; it has spoiled the coronet of its lustre, and sunk the highest rank in contempt. Drunkenness has caused more misery than all other social evils put together." Nothing stronger than this could certainly be written on opium smoking !

But opium smoking in contradistinction to opium eating or drinking, has been held up to scorn, as being the much worse vice of the two, and therefore as a much worse vice than drinking alcoholic liquors. The effects on the constitution of opium smoking, as compared with the effects of opium eating is a question which has never yet been thoroughly investigated. Probably the ultimate results do not very much differ. There can, however, be little doubt, that when the fumes of opium are inhaled, thus meeting almost directly with the blood as it circulates through the lungs, the system must become affected more quickly than when opium is taken into the stomach, and passes through the slower processes of absorption or digestion. Again, when opium is swallowed, not only the narcotising agent but all other constituents of this complex compound are also taken into the stomach, which may probably excite dyspeptic derangements which opium smoking would not do. It therefore appears more than probable that smoking is the least deleterious method of consuming the drug. After the narcotising agent has pervaded the system, the effects from this must be the same in whatever manner it may have attained entrance. There is, however, no valid reason why opium smoking

should be specially obnoxious to those objecting to the drug. There are not wanting many observers who have declared their belief that opium smoking is even less injurious than it has been admitted to be in this article. Thus in the Medical Report of the Ceylon Rifles for 1869, opium smoking is spoken of as "exerting a protective influence," and as being "not more injurious than tobacco smoking." It is further added, that the mortality was comparatively less amongst those smoking opium. Dr Teacher says it does no harm to Malays; and Dr Anderson, formerly of Singapore, makes a similar observation with regard to Malays. Jessop, after three years' experience, saw no ill effects in China so long as the smoker took his food well; and this agrees with Doolittle's observation that opium smoking is comparatively harmless among the better classes, who are not exposed to hunger and want.

Dr Ayres, who was Colonial Surgeon at Hong-Kong for a lengthened period, says it is a mistake to attribute to the smoking of opium, as a rule, the fearful and ghastly results with which it is usually credited. This fully agrees with the experience of opium eating in India. Some years ago the writer, when Superintendent-General of Dispensaries in Rajpootana, attempted an investigation into the number of opium-eaters or smokers in the province as compared with population, and also as to the maladies supposed to be excited by the use of the drug; when on the latter point, the following conclusion was expressed :\*—"I am indeed of opinion that the only malady opium eating in Rajpootana tends to foster is the minor ailment of constipation—a conclusion doubtless somewhat startling to those worthy people who esteem opium eating worse than spirit drinking, and who would at any cost stop not only its sale, but also its production from the bountiful bosom of the earth. I do not of course defend the practice of immoderate opium eating, neither

\* Selections from Records of Government of India, Foreign Department  
No. 118.

do I advocate the drug being given indiscriminately to children, but daily evidence sufficiently proves that it is often, or continually, administered to children without the latter being very much the worse for it ; and that grown up people may take it without injury for years—may even, under certain circumstances and at certain times, consume it with advantage.”

From the foregoing it is, perhaps, evident that a moderate use of opium may be regarded as not only *not injurious*, but even in some instances actually beneficial. As every blessing has its drawback, so every cloud has its silver lining, and a silver lining may be discerned in the moderate use of opium. Use and abuse are very different degrees, and the question of course arises, What is the moderate use of opium ? Unfortunately, as is the case with a similar query as regards spirits, no general answer can be given. So much depends on idiosyncracy, on constitution, and on employment, that the moderate use of the drug by one would probably be the excessive use of the drug by another. Of course it is admitted that, as a general rule, notwithstanding any exceptional instances of benefit, both Chinamen and other races would be the better as a mass if opium were never used ; but as there are “tongues on trees, books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything,” so even opium eating or smoking is not an exception to the universal law.

It is a curious thing that so much philanthropy and energy are expended by English people on distant nations. It would seem as if distance lent enchantment to the view, for philanthropic enterprises of the kind most generally meet with cordial support. It would appear as if distance were even *necessary* to draw out the latent energies of some people. A reference to Mrs Jellyby and the South Sea Islanders is trite. But we have, in our own experience, known a Dorcas Society passing their time at home in making little jackets, trousers, and shirts for the naked little natives of India, who, by-the-bye, do not wear any

do not want diminutive garments of the kind : and to the present time the mystery is, what became of those garments ! Transported, however, to India, ladies of the Dorcas Society were soon engaged in making clothing for the street Arabs of London ! Doubtless familiarity breeds contempt, and many are apt to ignore the misery they see or might see daily while becoming sentimentally enthusiastic over the miseries they read of. There are "sinners to be saved" much nearer home—where charity is said to begin, but often does not—than China. We confess to place more confidence in that charity which does begin at home, and then diverges into other quarters. Are philanthropists aware that opium eating or smoking is not uncommon in England ? In any large town quantities of opium, and of articles containing opium, are sold, which are not used medicinally. Some 300,000 lbs. of opium are annually imported into the United Kingdom, only one kind of which, it is stated, is used medicinally. The opium shop portrayed in 'Edwin Drood' is not altogether a fancy sketch ; and it has been frequently observed that more opium is sold in England when low wages will not permit indulgence in spirits ; the same cause thus influencing in England as in China. Human nature is so constituted that whether men live under the pole or the equator, much of their happiness or misery depends on the fullness or emptiness of the stomach. As Becky Sharpe pathetically observed, it is so much more easy to be good when one is rich than when one is poor. It has been calculated that two pennyworth of opium is equal in exhilarating or intoxicating power to six pennyworth of spirits ; this fact alone constituting a very great temptation to the poor. Then there is a very large and increasing consumption of opium in the United States. But we do not suppose those who would interfere and save China, would care much to interfere and save the United States, even if the opium there consumed came from India. Then, to say nothing about drinking—an evil which in Great Britain would afford ample scope for the whole army of

philanthropists—there is the growing custom of chloral drinking. The habit of chloral drinking produces a condition of system as pitiable as that arising from either opium or spirits, and the consumption of chloral is now enormous, and principally, owing to its price, amongst the better classes of society. Neuralgia or a migraine is now to many an invaluable refuge, and the nerves are to-day an excellent substitute for what our grandmothers denominated “the spleen,” and which they were wont to cure with salts and senna; but for which our “aunts, our sisters, and our cousins” fly to chloral. Macaulay said that periods of public virtue occurred to Englishmen, on various subjects, about every seven years, so perhaps that cyclical change is approaching when attention may be again more especially directed to home dissipation and evils, rather than to foreign woes. Some enthusiasts there be, however, who are always ready at any time to fight any kind of evil or injustice, even if they possess no better weapon than a broomstick. Such people would, if they had to perform Othello, not be content with blacking their faces, but consider it a duty to black their bodies also. They will not understand that morals differ in different countries, in different communities, under different religions, as morals have differed among ourselves in different generations. They think everything should be conducted according to their own narrow line and rule. But the desires of a nation cannot be so controlled. The attempt is as futile as an endeavour to keep back the tide with a fence of bulrushes. Neither do they receive thanks. The public generally treats its friends as the overloaded ass treated the good-natured man who relieved it of part of its burden—the stupid donkey kicked him! When Don Quixote rescued the galley slaves, they rewarded him with stones, and stole his squire’s ass.

An argument used against opium is an assertion that the Indian ryots are forced to cultivate opium, and that in consequence less cereals are grown, and therefore famines are rendered the more likely. To any one practically

acquainted with India, the above assertion, and the conclusions therefrom, are absurd. The ryots are *not* forced to grow opium, but they are quite willing to grow it when their land is suitable, as it is a more lucrative crop than cereals. But it is only in certain districts where the land is suitable; and doubtless there is not sufficient grain grown in those particular districts for local consumption. But the total land devoted to opium amounts to a very fractional portion of the total cultivated land of India, and the influence which a fractional portion of land devoted to opium exerts in the production of famine is infinitesimal. When during the American war most of the ryots of Western India began to grow cotton instead of grain, apprehensions of scarcity as a consequence was very rightly entertained; but the ground then devoted to cotton was enormous as compared with the opium tracts.

For the information of those not acquainted with this part of the subject, it may be briefly mentioned that the connection of the British Government with the opium trade with China was long in this wise. Opium growers were licensed and received advances during the production of the crop, and the full price on taking the opium to the Government weighing scales. Some years ago, Sir William Muir proposed giving up the system of advances and of purchasing the opium, arguing that the same revenue might be raised by an increased pass duty. This would not certainly diminish the amount of opium imported into China, for the Chinese, as already shown, will have Indian opium, and Indian traders are ready to supply it, and will supply it, legally if possible, illegally if not possible. But Sir William Muir's plan, it was considered, would relieve the Government of the charge which has been so frequently made of overstocking the market and of flooding China with the drug. The Opium Acts of 1876 and 1878 have, however, considerably modified former arrangements, rendering the custom laws for the time being applicable to opium.

Such effusions as the following against the supply of

opium to the Chinese, are, to say the least, far-fetched and misplaced.

"The very nation which has been foremost in suppressing the slave trade, and which paid twenty millions to abolish slavery, has, for the sake of illicit gain, demoralised an unoffending people."

"Fellow-countrymen, Christians by profession, do ye not blush at the just censure passed upon ye by the heathen, whose laws ye violate, whose bodies ye debilitate, whose immortal souls ye peril, by your love for the filthy lucre of gold?"

From a consideration of the whole question in its various phases, the following conclusions may, we think, be fairly arrived at:—

1. In their protests against the use of opium the Chinese Government have not been honest: the real reason they did not desire the trade, being *first* the fear of the great exportation of silver; and *secondly*, a stinging sense of humiliation from being obliged, as the result of British victories, to admit Indian opium to the treaty ports on a fixed tariff (although this does not prevent their placing any tax on such opium carried into the interior of China).

2. Opium taken in excess is undoubtedly injurious.

3. Chinese grown opium, owing to some defect in soil, or in cultivation, or in manufacture, or to some difference of climate, or to adulteration, is much more deleterious than Indian opium.

4. But opium taken in excess is not more injurious than alcohol taken in excess.

5. Opium taken in moderation is not injurious.

6. Opium is especially suited to the Chinese constitution, habits, and to the small pecuniary means of the masses.

7. The Chinese people will have opium. If they do not obtain superior opium from India they will extend the growth of inferior opium in China, or obtain it from other countries (Turkey and Persia).

8. Seeing that the effects of opium are not more deleterious than those arising from alcohol, all arguments

against the sale of the one apply to the sale of the other ; therefore, if the trade in the one article is stopped the trade in the other should be stopped also.

9. There is, however, from the fact that some Chinese take opium in excess, no moral reason why trade in the drug should be restricted to a greater extent than may be imposed by custom dues.

10. The questions whether the Government of India should obtain their opium revenue by being practically the grower and seller of the drug, or whether the revenue from opium should be limited to custom dues, are altogether foreign to the question of the morality or injurious influences of the trade.

## ARTICLE IV

SINCE the publication of my article on "The Opium Question" in the 'Indian Medical Gazette' for September and October last, I have received communications expressing satisfaction that the subject had been treated in a liberal sense, also the reverse. Some person wrote an anonymous letter little short of abusive. If he had said that my pretensions to sift the wheat from the chaff of the opium question resembled the wrigglings of a worm endeavouring to walk on its tail, the writer's meaning would have been expressed in fewer words! Another gentleman, with true military *fortiter in re* friendship, told me my pamphlet was fit to line trunks with. I have therefore good reason to remember Longfellow's aphorism, "Suffer and be strong," which some matter-of-fact Englishman observed was only a variation of the old adage "Grin and bear it!" and this is easy, because truth is great and must prevail. I reassert, that the anti-opiumists very much exaggerate the evil effects of opium; that opium in moderation is not injurious, and even in some instances beneficial; that it causes less injury to human beings than alcohol.

I maintain there is absolutely no proof that those using opium, either in China or elsewhere, except when using the drug to excess, are in any way injured by the practice.

Amongst other communications I have received on the subject is a small work, published recently by Messrs. Nisbet & Co., entitled 'The Indo-British Opium Trade and its Effects,' by Theodore Christlieb, D.D., Ph.D., Professor of Theology and University Preacher, Bonn,

Prussia, and translated from the German by David B. Croom, M.A. This book is evidently written earnestly by a gentleman of great learning, and who really believes in the injury which opium is said to inflict. Of course it is written somewhat in a sensational style, the Introduction commencing :—“ Wholesale murders, past and present, and the opium trade ;” and equally as a matter of course everything is advanced and quoted against opium, while nothing is said in its favour ; either as regards the manner in which the opium trade commenced, the manner of its extension, the true reasons why the Chinese Government desired to suppress it, or of the effects of opium when used in moderation. The book in short may be described by the following sentence :—A dish of sensational fallacies rendered digestible by a garnish of truth ! As the “ Anti-opium Society ” have recently declared their intention of raising £25,000 for a new and more energetic crusade against opium, I cannot permit Dr Christlieb’s book to pass without observation. The general public have not the time to act on Bacon’s aphorism, “ He that questioneth much shall learn much,” and the Doctor’s book is eminently calculated to unloose the purse strings of the benevolent Briton. The publication of a work so much to the point by a foreigner, is undoubtedly a score in favour of the “ Anti-opium Society ; ” for John Bull is now told that the continental nations are regarding his (the Indo-British) opium trade with compassionate scorn, as “ marking the proud flag of Albion with a broad black stain.”

Dr Christlieb’s book commences with some sensational remarks on “ wholesale murder,” in which opium, “ carrying poison to millions of Chinese,” is curiously and inappropriately mixed up with the effect of the “ blue flame ” of alcohol on Indian tribes, with the doings of slave dealers, and with the general relations of Christian with heathen people ; the observations being intended to show that opium is the most destructive agency yet delivered by the one on the other. Next, we have a glance at the history of the British opium trade down to

the present time, which is fairly enough rendered, except that little mention is made of opium being imported to China long before the British commenced to trade, and that opium was grown in China centuries previously ; and no mention is made of the real reason why the Chinese Government endeavoured to prohibit the opium trade, as indeed all other trade, viz. the fear of the drain of silver from the country, which once culminated to such an extent that the Imperial Court had to take metal from the Buddhist temples for the repair of the Pekin Palace. A statement quite contrary to fact is however made, viz. that the opium trade was at last legalised in direct opposition to the wishes of the Chinese people ; such an assertion being altogether unreconcilable with the imperious demands of the people for opium, which they *will* obtain from other countries, and which they *will* grow extensively for themselves if debarred from obtaining what they desire from India.

Next, we have a consideration of the effects of the opium trade on the commerce of England with China, which, it is stated, "is damaging in the highest degree, feeding the traditional hatred of China against England." The comparatively small import of British goods into China is attributed to opium, on the grounds that the man whom opium has reduced to beggary must be a bad customer. But, as pointed out in my former paper, the laws of China forbade the export of silver. The Chinese Government would sell but not buy. It was, indeed, the continual drain of silver on account of opium which formed the principal reason why the authorities opposed the will and desires of the people in the matter. The history of our relations with China abundantly shows, that if possible the Chinese Government would have prevented all trade whatever with "foreign devils," because trade of the kind took silver from the country. And now, the fact that the tax on opium imported into the treaty ports is fixed by agreement, the result of British victories, offends the dignity of the Celestial Govern-

ment. It is, indeed, a standing memento of their own humiliation and defeat which they would get rid of at any cost, and which they are endeavouring to get free from under assumed high moral grounds.

It is an old and truthful axiom that charity begins at home, but as a rule opium philanthropists apply their moral pocket-handkerchief to the uttermost limits of the globe. Dr Theodore Christlieb does not do this, however. For he says, "Lastly, the most serious result of the opium traffic is this, that the evil which England has been the means of causing to other nations is now beginning to work mischief among her own people. The curse which she has brought upon others is now beginning to return on her own head. The secret, non-medicinal use of opium is gaining ground in England." And if it supersedes spirit drinking and chloral nips there is reason to suppose the change would be beneficial rather than the reverse ! Two penny-worth of opium is equal in intoxicating or exhilarating power to six penny-worth of spirits, this fact alone constituting a very great temptation to the poor, and it has yet to be proved that the moderate use of opium is at all more injurious than the moderate use of spirits, while it has not to be proved that the immoderate use of spirits is quite as injurious as the immoderate use of opium.

The large mortality of children in England, especially in some of the manufacturing centres, is also attributed to opium. While on an average children die at the rate of 150 *per mille*, in Bradford it is stated that they die at the rate of 230 per 1000 per annum. And this excess of mortality is stated to be in a large measure due to the effects of opium. But in the opinion of Dr Christlieb it does not appear to be sufficient ! For it is (apparently jubilantly) added, "should this evil assume great proportions in England what a terribly just recompense it would be for the long-continued wholesale murders in China." Worse even than Cardinal Manning, who only fears, that "if this trade is not put down a severe chas-

tisement would come upon England, and perhaps sooner than was generally anticipated."

The mortality of children in England from narcotics is doubtless even now large ; but if it is to be reduced, it will be necessary to stop the sale of patent medicines, such as "teething syrups" and "elixirs," containing narcotics, for, as shown in my previous paper, British mothers do not use opium water or *umal-pawnee* to quiet the fractious child as the Indian female frequently does. But these compounds are sold as medicines, and it does not appear, although implied by Dr Christlieb, how a cessation of the opium trade with China will diminish the sale of such medicines, or the consequences arising therefrom in Bradford or Manchester. Neither is it clear how the growing use of opium in the United States is to be lessened by India ceasing to import the drug to China. But as the use of opium by British mothers and by Americans is widely attributed to the opium trade with China, so it is implied that the effects will cease on removal of the cause !

Next, a point is made of "the stain which opium has brought on the national honour of England in the eyes of India." "No rajah," it is stated, "under a purely native system would administer the opium revenue as we do, the Brahmins would soon starve him out. That is, the moral sense of the heathen would be strong enough to compel the cessation of a system which the moral sense of Christians permits—an unmistakable sign this of the detestation in which the opium policy of the Government is held among natives." Now the above reasoning is surely obscure ! What is the unmistakable sign ? Simply an assertion of what might happen, and therefore not worth further comment ! In my humble opinion, after a knowledge of many rajahs, if one possessed the same power and authority the British Government does, he would make as much revenue as he could out of opium, and the Brahmins would not "starve him out," whatever that expression may mean. Maharajah Holkar is Chief of

Malwa, and Dr Christlieb evidences his perfect ignorance of rajahs if he opines the Holkar would disdain an opium revenue, even if it attained the dimension of that derived by the British Government. The native states will always produce opium so long as it pays, whether it is grown in British India or not. I venture to say that an order from the Government of India to put down opium cultivation would produce an amount of discontent, both among our own subjects and in the native states, which would be as dangerous as the measure would be cruel. Such a measure is, indeed, outside the range of practical politics. Passingly, also, I enter an objection against the natives of India being sweepingly designated "heathen," which they certainly are not, except in missionary neology.

But the opium trade not only stains the national honour of England, but "exerts a demoralising influence on the Indian Government itself." The facility, it is said, with which revenue can be procured from opium hinders the Government from bestowing sufficient attention on public works or useful enterprises, such as irrigation and the construction of canals, which might contribute much to the prevention of famines. It is gravely stated that "the first and most striking effect which the extension of poppy plantations has had on India is considerably to diminish the amount of land available for crops, and the quantity of corn actually produced;" and it is insinuated that "the dreadful famine of 1865-7 in Orissa, during which parents are said to have eaten their children," was caused by opium cultivation. It is more decidedly stated that the last famine in Bengal was most severely felt in those districts where the production of opium is greatest. And it is roundly asserted as a fact "that the cultivation of opium in Malwa diminished other agricultural products to such a degree that in the neighbouring State of Rajpootana 1,200,000 human beings died from starvation and the diseases caused thereby." Now, rectitude is not always observable even in religious disputes, and anti-opiumists appear to imagine they may argue in a similar

manner. Dr Christlieb and his translator, David Croom, must be either grossly and lamentably ignorant of the history of the Indian famines to which they refer, or they must designedly have ignored all rectitude when making the statements as above, which insinuate and express glaring untruths. The Orissa famine referred to was caused by the premature cessation of the rains in 1865, and it was perpetuated in consequence of the difficulty, in the absence of roads and rail, of conveying grain into the interior. The famine had no more connection with opium than German literature has with a German flute! Yet the writers above referred to, not content with insinuating such a connection as cause and effect, must needs render it more sensational by introducing the horror of parents eating their own children! One or two false steps may be forgiven, but it is more difficult to pardon a fall down a whole flight of stairs! On this principle the reputed cannibalism of parents on their own children appears to be brought forward, as rendering the famine and its insinuated cause opium less pardonable in the eyes of the British public, who, usually too busy to look into a matter for themselves, are apt to believe those who assert the loudest and longest. Now, Orissa is not only subject to famine, but the province is unfortunately also liable to floods. In 1866 the famine was intensified by the submergence of 1049 square miles, from which calamity many thousands lost their lives, and many more lost their property. Opium may quite as justly be credited with producing the floods as with causing a famine. Probably the fact of the floods was not known to the authors of the 'Indo-British Opium Trade,' or with characteristic imprudence or ignorance some intimate connection would have been insinuated. Then, as to the statement that the famine in Bengal was most severely felt in those districts where the production of opium is greatest, the history of the famine shows that it was extended pretty equally over a much more extensive tract than the comparatively insignificant spots where opium cultivation is pursued.

We now come to the astounding statement that "the cultivation of opium in Malwa diminished agricultural products to such an extent that in the neighbouring state of Rajpootana 1,200,000 human being died from starvation and the diseases caused thereby. A proof surely that there is more than a possible connection between the ever-recurring famine in India and the cultivation of opium." It has been stated that "a lie that is half a truth is ever the blackest," but, as we all know, there is no rule without an exception. And the above is an exception, for nothing could be blacker, meaning further from the truth, than the above statement, and here I speak from my personal experience. During the first famine year, as Superintendent-General of Dispensaries and Vaccination in Rajpootana, I travelled on horseback nearly 1500 miles through the famine-stricken tracts, and a record of my journey was published in the 'Gazette of India' and in the 'Annual Report of Dispensaries, Vaccination, Gaols, and Sanitation' for the province. The first year's famine in Rajpootana was caused by the almost total failure of the rains, especially throughout the western division of the province. Notwithstanding the charms and offerings of the local rain makers, the skies remained as brass and the earth as iron until the time had passed for the sowing of the crops, and a treble famine of grain, grass, and water commenced. Then, as their forefathers had done on previous occasions, the people of the west, driving their cattle with them, left the rainless country in three great streams. One division travelled north towards the Punjab; one division went south to Guzerat; but the greatest stream went last, over the Aravellis, through the comparatively less famine-stricken tracts of Meywar *into the promised land of Malwa*, a land, notwithstanding its opium cultivation, overflowing with milk and honey in comparison with Marwar and its sterile plains, Bickaneer and its sand hills, or even Meywar with its lakes dried up. The people who thus left Western Rajpootana remained living as best they

could where they found pasture and water for their cattle, many of whom, however, died, until the rains of 1879 commenced. Then they streamed back again to their villages, and, hopeful for the future, prepared the ground and put in the seed for the next rain-crop. The rains were favorable, the crops sprouted, and the country once more assumed a prosperous appearance. But when the crops were half grown a new calamity befell these districts. Locusts, numerous as the sands of the sea, appeared, and in a few days not a green thing was left. The growing crops were consumed to the ground, and the trees were stripped of their leaves as if subjected to a British winter. The numbers of the locusts unless actually seen can scarcely be imagined; the face of the country was covered with them. For miles my horse crushed them at every step, while near the hedgerows or in other sheltered spots, particularly in the Marwar State, the young were in vast heaps, looking at a distance not very unlike masses of large wasps. They even invaded the villages, and drove the people from their dwellings.\* Then again the wretched people emigrated, passing as before in three great streams to distant districts. But their flocks and herds were much diminished in numbers; the people having exhausted their means in the previous year, became daily more and more debilitated; the rainfall, although not excessive, was an average, and with the drying-up process after the rains the usual fevers occurred, which were tenfold more destructive than ordinary, the malaria acting on constitutions deprived of stamina by previous want and exposure.

Here, then, is certainly sufficient to account for mortality without reference to opium cultivation. As a matter of fact opium proved the salvation of many; it enabled them to bear up against hardships which they could not otherwise have withstood. To a certain extent it supplied the place of food and drink, and it exerted to some degree a prophylactic influence over the malarious fever

\* 'History of the Famine in Rajpootana,' by Colonel Brooke,

which prevailed after the rains of the second year of famine.

Now the total extent of British India is estimated at 950,919 square miles, or 1,508,688,160 acres. Out of 11,539,648 acres which comprise the Punjab there were, according to the most recent available statistics, 10,905 acres under poppy cultivation. Out of 8,400,320 acres which form the North-West Provinces and Oude, there were 14,900 acres devoted to opium. In Madras the assessment gives 54,798,828 acres, of which 135 grew poppies. In Bombay, out of 24,042,173 acres 2,869 were devoted to the same purpose. In Bengal, in 18,864,420 acres opium occupied 7380. It therefore appears that there is merely a decimal proportion of the land devoted to opium. Even the exaggerated number of acres mentioned by Dr Christlieb (1,033,000) is but a decimal proportion. It is, however, suspected that some writers have mistaken the Indian "beegah"/\* for an acre, thus making 120 square feet do duty for 6480 feet, the contents of an acre. Dr Christlieb asks: "Is a Government justified in allowing the soil which might have been available for other purposes, to be devoted to the cultivation of a mere article of luxury?" Had he been aware of the facts, and honestly desirous of not overstating his case, such a question could scarcely have been asked!

China is also threatened with similar ills arising from opium as experienced in India. The cultivation of opium is rapidly increasing in China, and notwithstanding all the objections made by the Chinese Government against the importation of opium, the duty imposed on the home-grown drug is 50 per cent. lower than the amount levied on that imported from abroad. This of course is equivalent to the Chinese Government forcing the consumption of home-grown opium. All this, it is stated, has been brought about by the opium trade, and very soon so much land will be devoted to opium in China that, with the

\* Measurements of land are often given in Indian Reports in "beegahs" instead of acres.

want of good means of communication, famines must occur similar to those which have devastated India. It is added by way of emphasising the matter, "So recently as in the last decennium it was currently reported on the coast, where at the time rice was very cheap, that in Kansuh, the province in which opium first began to be cultivated in China, human flesh was being sold as food. (It will be noticed that Dr Christlieb is rather fond of introducing cannibalism, as we have previously had mothers eating their own children, as a result of famine, the consequence of opium in India !) But immediately afterwards (happy thought) is a description of the famine of 1877 in the north of China, which, although at the furthest side of the empire from the opium fields, is nevertheless by implication made to appear the result of opium !

With regard to the results of opium cultivation in India, it is stated that opium has made its way from the districts in which the soil permits of the growth of the drug into other localities, where the effects on the population are supposed to be as injurious, if not more injurious, than in China. Inaptly Assam is taken as the type of a province where opium in India has produced most of the evils to which flesh is heir. The women, our author goes on to say, have fewer children compared with those of other countries, and he attributes this to the use of opium. Now, it is well known that the first effects of opium are stimulating to the sexual powers, and if I am not mistaken barrenness amongst women has been more rightly attributed to widely different causes. In the districts which have become water-logged and malarious from over-irrigation in the North-West Provinces and in other parts of India, impotence and barrenness have been found to prevail amongst a population formerly not so affected. This is especially referred to in several Sanitary reports, and especially in Dr Cutcliffe's report on fever in the Meerut division in 1868. Dr Meredith having been many years in Assam may perhaps be as well qualified to give an

opinion as Dr Christlieb ; and Dr Meredith in his article entitled ‘On Malarial sites, and Fevers in Assam,’\* states—“Sterility was an important feature among the many ailments which imported labourers were subject to on tea gardens, situated such as those I have described . . . . During the sickly times none of the women became pregnant, and those who arrived at the places in that state suffered from miscarriage . . . . As the labourers’ health and condition improved they had families.” Now, I have no hesitation in stating my opinion, that a moderate use of opium by these people, would have tended to maintain rather than decrease physical power. Consul Gardner of Chefoo mentions that it is possible excessive smoking may impair fertility but the numerous cases he has known of immoderate smokers having large families does not confirm this view ; and he further remarks that the question arises how, if opium smoking be the great evil it is represented, there are no inherited ill-effects after so many years ?

Next, we have the usual declarations of the injury opium is inflicting on the Chinese. The practice of using opium is depicted as increasing ; the victims are said to be (without the slightest ground for any such assertion) 400,000 annually ; and the opium houses are of course spoken of as “dens.” Next, a mass of writers are quoted to demonstrate the evil effects of opium on the individual, the results of excessive use or abuse of the drug being generally portrayed as if it were the ordinary consequences. No mention is made of the well-known fact, that it is the poorer classes of Chinese who suffer most from opium, the classes who cannot afford Indian opium, and who habitually use native grown opium, which, owing to some defect of cultivation or soil, is much more deleterious than Indian opium. Yet it is to the use of native opium that anti-opiumists would drive all Chinese !

Lastly, and this is one of the most potent arguments

\* ‘Indian Medical Gazette,’ August, 1871.

against opium, "It has been the means of closing millions of Chinese hearts to the influence of Christian preaching." This it has done, first by confirming the Chinese Government in their resolution to keep foreigners and especially Englishmen, out of the country, and secondly, by preventing the Chinese accepting the Gospel, as the salvation of the people, from those whom they daily see working by a scandalous traffic at the ruin of China. Yet curiously enough it is stated, that "the field of missionary labour has been confined to those districts which by their proximity to the sea have chiefly come under the influence of the opium trade."

Dr Christlieb apologises for the slow progress of missions in China, saying, "when we look on that one hindrance opium which, irrespective of all others, is in itself so formidable, we may be well astonished, not so much that the results of missions in China are so small, but that they have been so great. Opium has been the means of closing millions of Chinese hearts to the influence of Christian preaching." In this Dr Christlieb has the support of H. G.—, the Archbishop of Canterbury, who, accepting the *ipse dixit* of missionaries, stated at the Mansion House: "Missionaries from China, whom he had met with from time to time, while speaking in satisfactory and hopeful terms (and when do missionaries speak otherwise ?) of the progress of Christianity in China, agreed that the opium trade had the most deleterious effects." But missions either in India or China can hardly be said to have reached any great success in comparison with the millions of so-called "heathen." Hence, while Indian missionaries have the impression that their progress has been retarded by the advantages given by the Government to secular education, missionaries to China assert they do not obtain converts on account of the discredit brought on Christianity by the import of opium. There is, however, positively no proof whatever in support of any such assertion. Disciples of Buddha, in argument with Missionaries, have doubtless used the

fact as a weapon against them, but this does not constitute it the cause of an effect. It is not of those able, like Buddhist priests, to hold their own in argument, the missionaries usually make converts.

If the results of missions in China are compared with the results of missions in other eastern countries, the disparity of results does not seem so very extended. There are some thoughts which are perhaps better left unspoken, but this much may be said. It may be doubted if opium prevents missionary success at all. It may be even argued that it has facilitated entrance to the missionaries by bringing the people in contact with Europeans. For, as before stated, Chinese fulminations have been directed, not only against opium, but against any kind of association for trade, under the idea that the country would be drained of its silver. The fact is, that when Christianity encounters pure Buddhism it meets an opponent somewhat worthy of its steel. For while the life of Christ and the life of Buddha, both commence by a miraculous conception, the morality inculcated by both is not so very dissimilar. Buddhism teaches the most essential virtues, as truthfulness, benevolence, purity, patience, humility, courage, and contemplation. An offensive and gross language is forbidden, nothing is ever to be said to stir up ill will or excite enmity, or that would cause quarrels, and it is a duty on all occasions to act as a peace-maker. About one-third of the human race profess Buddhism. Conversion to Christianity involves the belief in certain statements the counterparts of which, when found in Buddhism, are regarded as impossible and untrue by Christians. It is these difficulties, not opium, which retard missionary progress.

The following question has been recently asked:—"What will anti-opium agitators and missionaries say to this? We mean the well-known declaration of two of the highest and most powerful Mandarins, Li Hung Chang and Tso Tsung T'aang, "That out of the two evils, we would prefer to have your opium, if you will take away all your

missionaries." This was said to Sir Thomas Wade, H.M. Minister at Peking.

In the conclusion of his book, Dr Christlieb remarks : "Perhaps the day is still nearer when China will be able to defy the power of England, and cast her treaties to the winds." Doubtless a German wish is father to this German thought. Should that day, now as remote as the Greek kalends, ever arrive, Dr Christlieb may rest assured that Buddhism will be less tolerant of Christianity in China than it is now.

## ARTICLE V

ANTI-OPIUMISTS, in their philippics against the use of the drug, assert with more or less vigour the impossibility, or at least the almost prohibitive difficulty, of any person once taking opium ever being able to give up the habit. A person having once passed the rubicon between total abstinence and indulgence, cannot, it is affirmed, retrace his steps. He has placed a barrier between vice and virtue impassable as the Styx. He may heartily desire and fully intend to depart from his evil ways, but he is unable to cross that abyss so often stretching between intention and execution. We know there is truth in the old Eton Latin grammar exemplar, "Nemo mortalium omnibus horis sapit." It was illustrated when Goldsmith consented to sing, at a meeting in Gerrard's, about a little old woman tossed in a blanket seventeen times as high as the moon : it was illustrated when Charles Lamb, being asked by Mrs K— how he liked babies, rudely replied that he "preferred them boiled." But, unlike Goldsmith and Lamb, the opium-eater is always on duty among the unwise, and he must continue using opium—even as the brook flows on—for (at least his) evermore. Should he by some miraculous and mysterious interposition in his favour be enabled to abstain, he eventually returns to his opium pipe and his opium "den ;" thereby exemplifying the ghastly doctrine preached by Boswell on some hastily expressed opinion of Johnson, that men's evil habits return to them later in life. In short, a person who takes opium is regarded by the anti-opiumists as little better than a

dead man, as a shadow hastening to the lower world under the grim convoy of Charon ! In China the present of a coffin to an aged relative, especially if he be in bad health, is considered a delicate mark of respect, love and esteem. This does not appear to have been noticed in connection with the use of opium. Otherwise we might have had the statement, that all opium smokers are immediately presented with coffins by their relations ! An assertion which would not be more exaggerated than many of the statements which are systematically set forth in the sensational notices issued to the British public.

There are half a dozen or more old stories in the classics to show that there are wishes the gratification of which is fatal. But opium smoking does not belong to this category. Facts do not support the assertion that a man once using opium *must* do so to the end of the chapter. Facts indeed show rather the reverse, and prove that it is quite possible for an opium smoker to give up the practice, although, as is the case with drunkards, a great many, perhaps the majority, do not do so.

In a former paper the opinion of a Chinaman was referred to, who in a series of letters to the 'Times' in 1875, while altogether condemning the use of opium, stated, "the habit of opium smoking is not in any case irremediable," and he gives instances to the point. The Chinaman, it will be noted, does not qualify his statement, but asserts the habit is not irremediable in *any case*. Sirr,\* who is one of *the most uncompromising* of writers, in his denunciations against opium mentions a confirmed smoker who for three years abandoned the use of the drug. Long† says, "many use it in moderation, and are sufficient masters of themselves to keep on the right side of slavery." The Rev. R. H. Cobbold ‡ writes, "men of determination may throw off the habit." Doolittle § mentions that if a

\* 'China and the Chinese.'

† 'The Chinese as they are.'

‡ 'Pictures of the Chinese.'

§ 'Social Life of the Chinese.'

man only smokes at irregular intervals he will not feel the ardent longing, and may therefore break himself of the habit. Dr Osgood\* states that when opium smokers enter the asylum at Foochow, the opium is discontinued at once, tonics and good food being given. Dr Ayres,† Colonial Surgeon at Hong-Kong, relates the case of a person whose consumption of opium had been for nineteen years two ounces a day. On the man entering the gaol the opium was at once stopped. For the first few days he suffered from want of sleep, but was soon in good health, and expressed himself much pleased at having got rid of the habit.

Mr Gardner, Consul at Chefoo, states,‡—At the end of 1865, being attacked with a severe fever, which left him so weak that he had no hopes of recovery, he felt justified in trying on himself the experiment of immoderate opium smoking. After some months' excessive smoking he suddenly gave up the habit, and suffered severe physical pain for three days. The pains and discomfort were not attended with mental depression. De Quincey renounced opium on four separate occasions for long intervals, and resumed it as a relief to mental and physical suffering, on deliberate judgment, as it was the least of two evils.

Recently the matter has been taken up by a New York physician, who shows that by judicious treatment, general and medical, the habit of taking opium may be fully overcome. The fact of one of the principal medical practitioners of New York, devoting his attention to this subject, certainly evidences the increase of the use of opium in America. Yet we do not hear of British philanthropists interfering to save the Americans, as they would save the Chinese. But China is more than double the distance away, and philanthropy of the kind appears to be furnished with Dickens' "mud-fog spectacles," which enable the

\* 'New York Medical Record,' 1878.

† 'Medical Times,' 1878.

‡ Parliamentary Blue-Book, 1881.

wearer to discern in very bright colours objects at a distance, and render him blind to those immediately before him.

We need not, however, search further than the Indian gaols for evidence that the use of opium may be stopped not only with impunity but with actual benefit in the cases even of confirmed smokers. It is the usual practice in Indian gaols to stop opium to prisoners. In the 'Indian Medical Gazette' for March, 1881, Dr Chetun Shah, Civil-Surgeon, Jhang, states, "the stoppage of opium has always been followed by amelioration in the condition of confirmed opium-eaters, and has done no harm to beginners." In the same periodical Dr Mayne, Civil-Surgeon, Nursingpoor, and who has the charge of a large gaol, enters somewhat fully into the subject. He states, "the result (of stopping opium) has been in every way satisfactory; some of the cases were very exaggerated instances." Dr Mayne also prefers the immediate and total stoppage of the drug to a gradual cessation of the amount used. The experience of Indian gaol officials thus agrees with that of Dr Ayres previously quoted, and who further mentions that opium is frequently stopped altogether, and no evil result ensues. In the Akyab gaol, Burmah, Dr. Foster very rarely gives opium in any shape; but in cases of habitual smokers who suffer from sudden and absolute cessation of their daily dram, he occasionally gives morphia for ten days after admission. He says that some few confirmed opium smokers have been thoroughly broken of their habit when in gaol, and have not relapsed after release. As further showing that a whiff from the opium pipe does not create an opium smoker, as some would apparently have us believe, it may be observed that young men have been induced to smoke in order that they might be disgusted by the first dose, thus illustrating that the old story of the greedy apprentice in the pastry-cook's shop is a fable of wide application.

Although it must be admitted that the majority of those addicted to opium find great difficulty in leaving off

the practice, and although it is certain that many persons cannot do so, the difficulty of abstinence is not more than that encountered by others using alcoholic liquors. The experience of every medical man and of many other persons will furnish instances of even well-educated people utterly unable to refrain from liquor, and eventually destroying themselves by drinking to excess. It may be as truthfully said of liquor, as of opium, that the person who indulges cannot refrain. Even if the pledge of abstinence is taken the "drink craving" in very many instances repeats itself, and further indulgence is the consequence.

Opium, whatever injury it may inflict on its victims, is not so destructive of all moral feelings and of all self-respect as alcohol. A drunken man is simply an idiotic beast. When unable to drink any more, he will "lie in the gutter and hiccup, 'throw the rest over me!'" Anti-opiumists in their enthusiasm tell many tales of the state into which opium reduces its victims. Quite as lamentable conditions may be recorded as the results of alcohol. There is an anecdote of Sheridan and a certain baronet, that both being drunk in the streets, the baronet fell into the kennel, and Sheridan having in vain endeavoured to get him on his legs again, stammered out, "My dear friend, I cannot help you, but I'll do all I can for you, I'll lie down in the dirt with you!" Whether true or not, the anecdote may be accepted as displaying at least one phase of inebriety. After this comes the quarrelsome stage. In a recent number of the *Times*, amongst the legal reports there are given no less than three cases of wife beating, one case of theft, and three cases of murder, all attributable to the quarrelsome stage of intemperance. A recent writer remarks, that "an almost inanimate Chinaman lying helpless and harmless under the full effects of opium is far preferable to drunken 'Arry Perkins jumping on his wife." The amount of crime, the ratio of misery, and the degree of destitution, which is attributable to liquor in the United King-

dom alone, certainly calls for as much consideration from philanthropists as the effects of opium on the Chinese. The results from alcohol are indeed worse than those from opium. If opium produces loss of appetite, so does alcohol; as opium causes loss of strength, so does alcohol; as opium results in loss of money, so does alcohol; as opium causes its votary to lose his time, so does alcohol; as opium curtails life, so does alcohol; as opium is credited with loss of virtue leading to profligacy and gambling, so must alcohol be credited; as opium is a cause of bodily disease, so is alcohol. But as alcohol is the agent of quarrels, leading to crime, so is *not* opium. As Mr Gardner observes, "No one is maddened by smoking opium to crimes of violence, nor does the habit of smoking increase the criminal returns or swell the number of prison inmates." No one can attribute quarrels, fights, wounds, manslaughter, murder, wife beating to opium, while alcohol causes all these crimes in abundance. As alcohol maddens and excites, so opium soothes and tranquillises, whatever may be the remote effects. As a quiet harmless sort of madness which expends itself on trifles is infinitely preferable to the vagaries of a raging lunatic, so is the condition produced by opium to that produced by alcohol—at least to the by-standers, who are never certain what the dipsomaniac may do, but may always be sure the opiomaniac will maintain his attitude of repose. Whatever injury opium may do, it does not cause the drunkard's disease "delirium tremens,"—a malady as distressing to those witnessing it as to those suffering therefrom. The man so saturated with alcohol as to be on the verge of "delirium tremens" suffers acutely from a great variety of horrid visions, among which snakes, monsters, and devils play a prominent part. The visions from opium are always of a pleasant description, and while the return to ordinary sensation of the dipsomaniac is matter of thankfulness to him, the recovery of the opiomaniac is matter of regret. Again, opium smoking is a solitary enjoyment, while drinking is a social one, and a man

cannot therefore be surprised into an excess of opium as he may be into an alcoholic debauch. It is sincerely to be desired that immoderate indulgence in both opium and spirits could be summarily stopped. But opium in its effects is not so much more virulent than alcohol, that while the importation of the latter into China should be permitted the importation of the former should be prohibited. As mentioned in a former paper, there is evidence that the Chinese were formerly a very drunken nation ; opium smoking has succeeded the tendency to spirit drinking, principally from the cheapness of opium as compared with spirits. If it were possible to prohibit opium altogether to the Chinese, alcohol or some other stimulant would take its place, or there would be a new departure in the history of nations. Thirst for stimulants has existed in all countries. History does not show a civilised, or a semi-civilised, or scarcely a savage nation, by whom some form of stimulant was not used. In India the use of nervine stimulants is coeval with its history. The craving for the use of such things must arise from some urgent necessity in man's nature. When we have removed our own beam, by performing the impossible feats of stopping all distilleries, pulling down all gin shops, banishing all distillers, retail vendors, importers and exporters of alcohol, then it will be time enough to talk of "the iniquity of the opium traffic and of the moral obliquity of those concerned." But anti-opiumists apparently do not look forward to any such millennium even in moral England, for Sir Bartle Frere, advocating the withdrawal of all direct concern with the manufacture and sale of opium, states, "Morally it would place the Government of India in the same position in its dependence on the taxation of the drug which the Government of England occupies in regard to excise and custom duties on spirits."\* Therefore the morality of some anti-opiumists is this, to accomplish indirectly what it is wrong to do directly !

\* Paper read at the Church Congress, Newcastle, Oct. 5th, 1881.

For whether the Government of India retain a connection as now with the opium trade or whether interference with the trade is limited to the ordinary customs department, the quantity of opium going to China will be pretty much the same, until the time arrives, when, either from increase, better quality, and cheapness of native growth ; or from a greater amount being imported from Persia ; or from heavy Chinese duty on the Indian drug, the latter ceases to be in such esteem.

But it would appear that the anti-opiumists are not altogether prepared to abolish the opium trade, and resign the Indian revenue therefrom, without at least some *quid pro quo*, for it is stated, “England might as a reasonable equivalent for the renunciation of a formal right, and as an indemnification for a great loss sustained, demand from China some other privileges.” These privileges are to take the shape of increased facilities for commerce generally, of the working of mines, and of the construction and working of railways by Englishmen. Such equivalents wrung from Asiatics would inevitably lead to evasion, deceit, quarrels, war, and probably extension of territory. We should be compelled to an onward course in China, as we have been obliged to press forward in India ; and in the eyes of Chinamen at least, the situation would be worse than it is now.

It must be admitted by the unprejudiced, that the effects of opium are at least not worse than the injuries produced by alcohol. But more than this, there are decided advantages attaching to the use of opium in comparison with alcohol. Amongst these comparative advantages must be the fact, previously referred to, that opium does not steal away the senses like alcohol ; “the loud laugh which speaks the vacant mind,” and “the passion which converts a wise man into a fool,” are not the results of opium. Then, again, opium is cheap, and with the lower classes who use opium, the *dulce* is usually the *utile*. But irrespective of comparison with alcohol there are other advantages derived from the drug. “Every

resident in China," says Mr Gardner, "is struck with the comparative immunity of the population from diseases of the bronchial tubes and lungs. That this immunity is not due to climatic influences is clearly proved by the fact that Europeans and Americans are not more free from the scourge here than they are in their own countries." This immunity is attributed to the use of opium, and the theory is tested by a reference to the Protestant Christians who live in similar localities, and who are debarred from the use of opium. "An enormous percentage of the deaths of native Protestant Christians is due to consumption." During Mr Gardner's residence in China he spent much time in visiting the opium shops of the large towns and small villages in many parts of the empire, and in conversation with the customers he was surprised at the large numbers who told him that their first motive for smoking was to check the spitting of blood, to which they had become subject. Again, vast masses of the Chinese live on undrained ground and in positions favorable to ague and malarious disease. Under similar circumstances the inhabitants of Lincolnshire used laudanum, where it was called the "black drop," as arsenical solution was called the "tasteless drop." But not only was opium used medicinally as laudanum, but also in another form. One of Charles Kingsley's novels describes the pile of little boxes of opium in the shop of a Cambridge chemist, and how they were carried off by the farmers' wives on market day. Moreover, "it is said to be a fact that in those few districts where the people habitually take opium, the children are healthy, strong, and not too numerous; while in the districts further west, where the inhabitants find comfort, not in opium but in alcohol, the proportion of idiocy and disease among the children is abnormally large, to say nothing of the brutality and cruelty which excess in alcohol produces."\*

It is not surprising that either the Chinese or any other

people living under conditions subjecting to malarious diseases should take to opium. Medical authors, during centuries past, have extolled the value of opium both as a prophylactic and a curative agent against malarious disease. Before the discovery of cinchona it was accounted one of the most powerful, if not the most powerful febrifuge, and it was used as a preventive as quinine is now taken, either given plain or in some aromatic tonic. In India there is no doubt of the prophylactic influence of opium.\* When short of quinine, I have frequently used it—of course generally without the knowledge of the patient. In another place, when noting the influence of opium over diseases of a malarious nature, I mentioned a very sick autumnal season at Joudpoor, when of the large number of persons, probably 200, attached in one way or other to the Political Agency, several opium smokers alone escaped fever more or less severe.

Again, opium is frequently taken for the relief of chronic painful affections, as rheumatism, sciatica, neuralgia, &c. The person is fortunate who, when suffering from the hideous throes of toothache, has never felt that it would be a relief to have the earache or the gout, that variety even in torture would be agreeable. Those ladies and gentlemen who "live at home at ease," with every comfort around them, are most apt to lift the stone against the "remote, unfriended, melancholy" ones who, wracked with pain and living in an unhealthy locality, regard existence as at best a choice of evils, and seek relief from pain, sorrow, and suffering by becoming votaries of opium. Of this class amongst the regular consumers of opium there are a vast number. Mr Gardner states, "that very many individuals suffer in health from excess is incontrovertible, but the number of these is not so great as is imagined. On the other hand, it is equally incontrovertible that thousands of hard-working people

\* 'Indian Annals of Medical Science,' 1881, "On Remittent Fever,"

are indebted to opium smoking for the continuance of lives more agreeable to themselves and useful to society." Even the Rev. Mr Cobbold says, "We must not suppose that every smoker who dies has been killed by opium, for it will be found that some, had it not been for opium, would have died much sooner."

To insist on the fact that excessive indulgence in opium produces ruinous consequences is beside the point at issue. What source of enjoyment, nay, what necessary of life, is there which, though in moderation harmless or beneficial, is not hurtful in excess? Even tea is a fruitful source of dyspepsia, if taken in large quantities. Even rice is a fruitful source of diarrhoea, if eaten new.

The power which opium confers on persons requiring to pass through extraordinary fatigue or labour, either mental or physical, was referred to in a former paper. Moreover, opium stimulates the memory and mental faculties, and hence the Chinese take it before going to business, and not after their bargains are concluded, as the American or Englishman would usually drink "or liquor up." Examples are also given in a former paper of opium used to promote physical progress and endurance both by human beings and for animals. The Rev. Mr Cobbold, I find, also remarks on palankeen bearers, on a long journey, stopping for the opium dose. It is curious that although so much has been said of the physical degeneration of the Chinese in consequence of opium, we do not find any complaints under this head in the accounts of the marches of Gordon's "ever victorious army."

The Chinaman, as a rule, is known to be the strongest, most industrious and enduring, as well as the most thrifty and provident of Asiatics, and it cannot be said that these are the characteristics of Chinamen only, who do not consume opium. There are large communities of these people in our own colonies, in America, and elsewhere, whom we know to be generally opium smokers, and who yet exhibit the qualities mentioned, in addition to that of

being peaceable and well-behaved citizens. Sir Charles Trevelyan observes: "Opium is said to be specially suited to the stolid, lethargic Turanian nature, and it is certain that Chinese boatmen and porters, who undergo much hard work and exposure, can even take large doses without being the worse for it."

There is yet another advantage which may be attributed to the use of opium. It prevents to a certain extent *eremacausis* or waste of tissue, and if taken in moderation must therefore prove beneficial to people suffering from deficiency of food. Vast numbers of the Chinese are very poorly fed, the staple food being rice and other vegetables, which, even when supplemented by dog and pig, are not obtainable by the masses in quantities sufficient for their wants. But opium, like tobacco, and like tea, enables persons to support life on a smaller quantity of food than they otherwise could subsist upon. Here, then, is another powerful reason why the use of opium should be popular among the lower classes, even as tea and tobacco are in other countries.

Truth in private life, and the reverse in public, certainly characterise a great many men, Englishmen among the number. Gentlemen who do not hesitate, either knowingly or undesignedly, to exaggerate into untruth on the subject of opium, would be ashamed to do so in private life.

But they do not hesitate to mislead the public by exaggerating the evil influences of opium. There are two sides to most questions. Neoptolemus, as the savage avenger of his father's death, slaying the grey-haired Priam at the foot of the altar and carrying off Andromache, is a very different version of the incidents to what they may be represented. We possess the sage's opinion of Xantippe, but we do not possess Xantippe's opinion of the sage. The anti-opiumists would apparently desire that their opinion of their Xantippe, opium, should be held by the public to the utter ignoring of the opinions of men well qualified to judge, but who judge justly, rightly,

and without prejudice of the effects of what Sherard Osborn designates "that much abused drug." In addition to evidence quoted in previous papers the following is now mentioned :—

Minturn, in his book 'From New York to Delhi' says : " From what I heard in China and should imagine, opium smoking does not produce those universally deleterious effects which are commonly attributed to it in Europe. Like alcoholic beverages it is very susceptible of abuse, but the victims of over-indulgence in this drug are not relatively more numerous than drunkards are among those nations where habitual stimulants are of an alcoholic nature." Lay says : " In China the spendthrift, the man of lewd habits, the drunkard, and a large assortment of bad characters slide into the opium smoker, hence the drug seems to be chargable with all the vices of the country. Doubtless she has her victims in persons who but for her fascinating lures might have escaped their ruin, but in the great majority of instances she only adds one stain more to the character already polluted." Mr Gregory, H.M. Consul, Swatow, allows that smoking of opium is an evil, " but to call it a disgrace to the country and to say that it is sapping the life of the nation, is an exaggeration which begs a great many questions. 'I smoke three pipes in a morning and three in an evening,' said an old, robust man, and 'find it does me good.' I have never seen," continues Mr Gregory, " a single case of opium intoxication, although living with and travelling for months and hundreds of miles with opium smokers." Mr Gardner, previously quoted, does not consider the habit of opium smoking so baneful a vice as it is commonly regarded. Dr Watson,\* who practised in China, while admitting the evil of immoderate indulgence, states, that it did not, in more than 10 per cent. of those using the drug, lead to immoderate indulgence, or distinctly interfere with general health. " All of them have been smoking

\* 'Chinese Customs Gazette,' quoted 'Med. Times,' 1877.

it for many years, but with the exception of the 10 *per cent.* referred to, they were able to attend to their duties. were healthy and sound, and enjoyed a good appetite. Foreigners have generally exaggerated the amount of evil said to follow the use of opium," Cameron, in his 'Account of Singapoore,' writes, " Opium does no harm in moderation, not so much as alcohol." A recent correspondent of the 'Pioneer' states "opium is a great good as well as an evil to China. It is a powerful remedy physically and a support and solace mentally to the toiling hard-working millions of China. One meets occasionally haggard, emaciated, miserable beings, true enough, victims not of use, but abuse of opium ; these, however, are units to the thousands of moderate smokers hale, hearty, and fat. I have known hundreds of these, yes, some fat enough to excite the envy even of the ghee fed big Baboos of Bengal."

Dr Ayres, the Colonial Surgeon, Hong-Kong, in his Report for 1877, states, that in his experience the habit does no harm in moderation. He mentions that there is a good deal of popular misconception and exaggeration on the subject. He pertinently observes that at the Tua-Wha Hospital the stranger may at any time see the the most dreadful and ghastly looking objects, in the last stages of scrofula and consumption, smoking opium, who had never previously been able to afford a pipe a day. Yet the European visitor leaves the establishment attributing to the abuse of opium effects which further inquiry would have satisfied him were due to the diseases for which the patients were in hospital. Dr Ayres states "No China resident believes in the terrible frequency of the dull, sodden-witted, debilitated opium smoker met with in prints."

The Rev. Dr Osgood, who as a missionary is in duty bound to regard opium as an "unmitigated curse," is still "free to admit that there are some cases where opium

\* 'New York Medical Record,' September, 1876.

is used constantly in small quantities for twenty or even thirty years, with comparatively little injury.”\*

We know that in India whole races, as the Sikhs for instance, consume opium in some form, and we know that they are *not* ruined physically and mentally, but, on the contrary, are among the hardest and most industrious of the people.

Struck by the exaggerated and sensational accounts that have been from time to time published concerning the evil results from opium, Dr Vincent Richards instituted a statistical inquiry at Balasore in Orissa, where the habit of using opium is very general and has much increased since the famine of 1866. The following are the conclusions at which he arrived :—1. That opium is taken habitually by about 8 to 10 per cent. of the adult population of Balasore, and that the average daily allowance for a man is seven grains, and for a woman five grains. 2. That moderation is the rule. 3. That moderate doses include from two to sixteen grains per diem, according to circumstances. 4. That opium-eating is much more common in unhealthy than in healthy localities, even though they are situated in the same district. 5. That the drug is sometimes taken in very large doses—thirty grains and upwards—without producing any very serious ill-effects, much depending on the constitution of the individual, and his habituation to its use. 6. That whatever the effects of the excessive use of the drug may be, when taken in moderation it is positively beneficial, where such diseases as fever, elephantiasis, rheumatism, &c., are present, and when food is scarce. 7. That the effects of even the most excessive use of opium are harmless, both to the individual and to society, compared with the excessive use of alcohol.\*

Even Sir C. U. Aitcheson, in his memorandum on the evil effects of opium used in Burmah states, “There are large numbers of the non-Burmese community, constituting

\* ‘Indian Medical Gazette,’ 1877.

perhaps the most thriving and industrious sections of the population, to whom the drug is a necessary of life and by whom it is rarely abused." And Mr Bernard, who succeeded Sir Charles Aitcheson as Chief Commissioner of Burmah, and who made special investigations into the subject, reported—"Neither in the gaols, nor in the opium shops, nor in the hospitals, nor in the streets, nor in the villages, save at Min-byin, did I come across actual tangible evidence" of the evil effects of opium. Yet opium is doubtless used very extensively in Burmah.

Very recently a publication has been issued from the "Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs." It is calculated by the compiler that there are in round numbers 1,000,000 smokers of opium. The population of China is spoken of as amounting to more than 400,000,000, and may be fairly estimated as something above 300,000,000. Estimating the population at these figures and the opium smokers at 1,000,000, the result is, that 3 in every 1,000 smoke, that is, opium is used by probably less than *one third of one per cent.* of the population! A sufficiently lame and impotent conclusion to the statements which have been unblushingly made that opium is rapidly destroying the Chinese nation!

Against the assertions of the bigot no reasoning will avail; but if any one will calmly, and with unprejudiced mind, examine the opium question, it will be found that the exaggerated and sensational accounts of the evil effects made by the anti-opium party, dwindle in a manner suggestive of a very weak cause indeed. It becomes, comparatively speaking, as the great Lexicographer described the ghost of Cave which he said he had seen, "Why, sir! a kind of shadowy thing!"

If the Chinese Government were really desirous of stopping the consumption of opium they would find a means of doing so. But in the opinion of those who know the Chinese Government best, there is no real wish on the part of the Government to stop the consumption of opium. If they desire to do so, and cannot accomplish it,

the autocratic power of the Celestial Emperor must be the mere shadow of its former substance ! If the will of the people is stronger than that autocratic power what right have we to interfere ? The fact is the Chinese Government neither can nor will prohibit the produce and use of opium any more than any other government in the world will or can prohibit the produce or use of tobacco, or of tea, or of fermented liquors. They might, however, if they desired, follow the example of the Government of India. The Indian Government being persuaded that opium was harmful in Burmah, have not hesitated to reduce the number of licensed opium shops by more than one-half, and opium is in future to be "drunk on the premises" alone. The possession elsewhere of even a small fraction is to be penal. And the changes represent a total loss of £50,000 on the annual revenue. It is a mistake to suppose, as many do, that opium is forced on the Chinese by the Anglo-Indian Government. They are not compelled by any treaty to purchase one ounce of opium, and if they thought proper might refuse to do so. They are as free to purchase opium from Turkey or opium from Persia as to purchase opium from India. But a revenue is derived from opium, and a pretty large sum too, as the import duty is increased in order to force the sale of home-grown opium. Whatever the Chinese Government may assert of their desire to stop the consumption of opium cannot be accepted as truthful while opium cultivation continues to increase in China. The memorandum from the Imperial Maritime Customs above referred to, estimates that 25,000 chests of native opium are produced annually in the province of Szechwan. Several years back the amount of native opium was estimated at 256,000 pounds annually. Opium indeed is indigenous to the Province of Yunnan, and Mr Hanbury, in his 'Notes on the Chinese Materia Medica,' states, that it contains a high percentage of morphia, so that from its low price it may enter into competition with Turkey or any other opium of commerce. It has been recently stated that

opium is imported from the northerly provinces of China into Yarkand and Kashgar, and Central Africa generally. It would be a strange finale if eventually we imported our opium from China !

Now as the poppy cannot be grown in secret, but flaunts itself white and red in a most distinctive and characteristic dress, the Chinese Government must be fully aware of its production ; and if the local officials connive at opium cultivation, that only shows that the *vox populi*, the will of the people, is more powerful than the Government.

As Williamson, in his 'Journeys in China,' observes, "Opium cultivation might be stopped in India, but that would make little difference in China." The only hope is the creation of a public opinion against it among those who abstain and among the young, so that the generation of opium smokers may in due course die out. This should be aided by endeavours to increase the material prosperity of the vast masses of poor Chinese, and especially by drainage of the land and by all other measures, such as more wholesome food and more healthy houses, calculated to prevent disease. But instead of any such action, the Chinese Government contents itself with a loud sounding protest, of which a recent letter from the "Grand Secretary of the Emperor of China" to the "Society for the Suppression of the Opium Trade" is an example. The Secretary says, "My Government never desired the empire to thrive upon the lives or infirmities of the subjects ; my Government is impressed with the necessity of making efforts to control this flood of opium before it overwhelms the kingdom. My Government will take effective measures to enforce the law against cultivation of opium in China and otherwise to check the use of opium." While the Government of China has allowed the cultivation of the poppy to the extent it is cultivated, and has derived a revenue therefrom, and while opium houses are permitted, the general opinion must be, that "my Government" doth protest too much, and that "my

Government" doth not act enough. The Rev. C. Gutzlaff, in his 'China Opened,' observes, "The Government has apparently endeavoured to check this vice by prohibiting the importation of opium, but it has in fact increased the consumption;" and Lay does not hesitate to say, the means of preventing the use of opium would be "the downfall of the Tartar Government, which has been the chief agent in nursing the abominable traffic." Quite recently, Mr. Spence, Consul at Ichang, has remarked, "In judging of the present attitude of China towards opium production within its own borders, and in drawing reasonable conclusions therefrom, men who prefer facts to prejudice, and who are guided by intelligent discretion, not by blind zeal, would give more weight to the acts of the rulers of China than to their words."

The truth is; China is endeavouring to impose on the world. While her authorities at the capital pose as helpless sufferers from the Indian import, her officials and people throughout the regions of the Empire, remote from foreign gaze, are cultivating opium everywhere. Yet in such provinces, the Chinese Government has even more arbitrary power than on the sea-coasts. Seeing that Chinese-grown opium is much more deleterious than the Indian drug, if the Chinese Government were really in earnest, they would take at least as energetic measures to stop the cultivation of the drug in China as they do to prevent the importation of Indian opium. But instead of this, the native produce is permitted, or even actually encouraged. Philanthropy must surely be wasted under such circumstances. Sir Charles Trevelyan has recently well observed, "The experience of every country in every age seems to indicate that the use of some stimulant is necessary for mankind, and I cannot find that opium stands on a different footing in this respect from spirituous liquors. They are both gifts of God, which ought to be used without being abused."

It is noticeable that many of the same order of philanthropists who are now agitating against opium were some

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time ago exciting themselves about vivisection, previously on the Contagious Diseases Act, and periodically regarding vaccination. It is satisfactory that these mischievous sentimentalists do not usually concern themselves about external politics, which would certainly, under their guidance, degenerate into a very flabby conduct indeed.









